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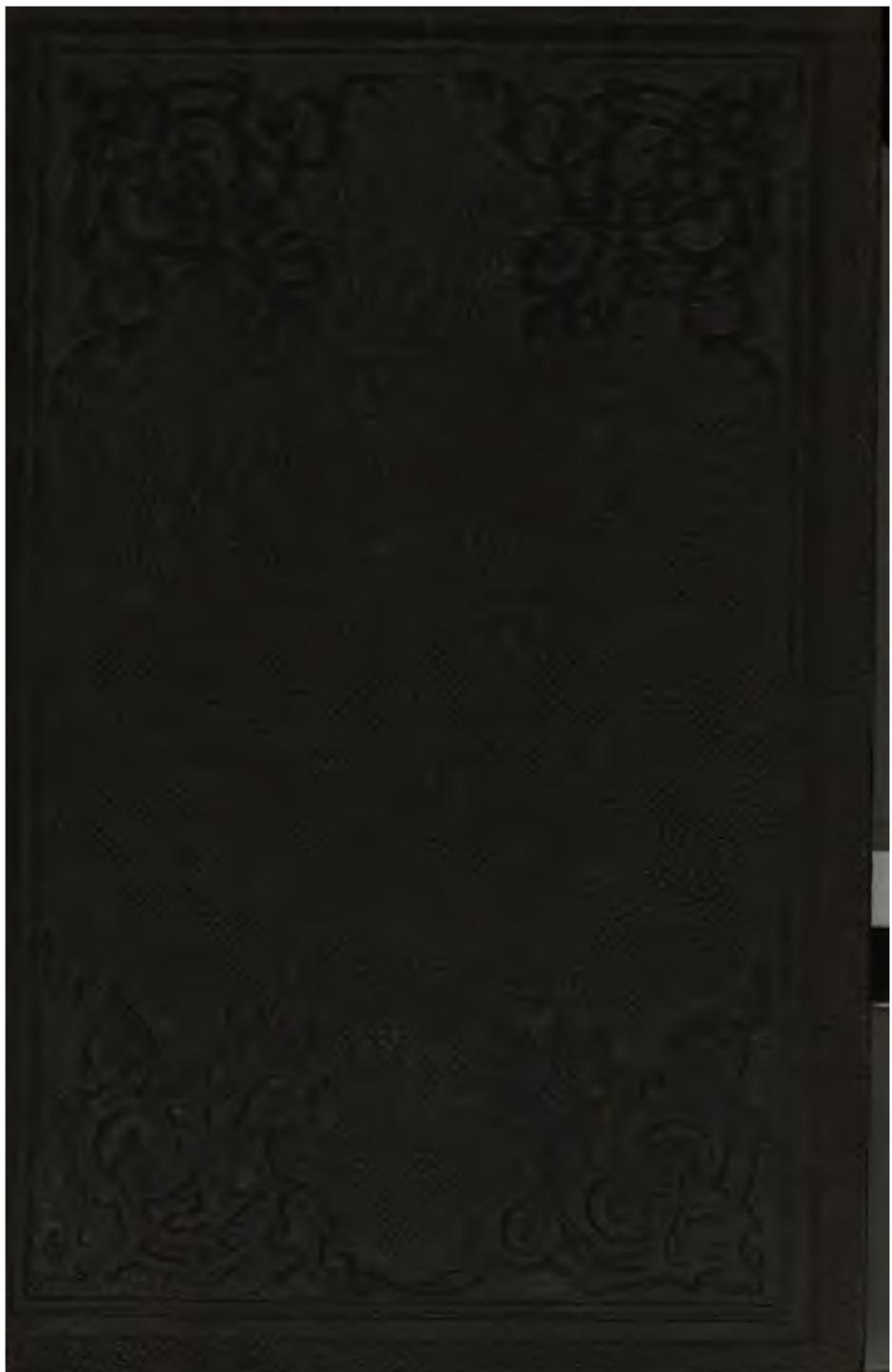
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# ST. MARTHA'S HOME;

OR,

## WORK FOR WOMEN.

BY EMILY BOWLES.

"In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope of death."—TENNYSON.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR, -	1
ST. JOSEPH'S NIGHT, -	53
THE NEW SERVANT, -	82
THE WIFE'S VICTORY, -	129
HOW DORA WENT INTO BUSINESS, -	168
WHAT BECAME OF THE COCK AND PIG, -	216



# Sister Martha, at Home and Abroad.

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## THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR.

### CHAPTER I.



NE of the commonest remarks made by people who frequent London without living there, is, that among the countless streams of passers-by, there is scarcely one to be found whose face does not express hurry, trouble, or vexation. The waves of human life, in their restless ebb and flow, cast up the mire and dirt of weariness of spirit, and the turmoil of every passion. How refreshing it is then to know, that if we dragged this waste of waters, though we should bring to light the lees and dregs of much unspeakable vileness, putrifying corpses and dead men's bones, we should here and there also chance upon a rich jewel, a fair pearl, or pile of long-buried gold, whose price and beauty would "be a thing of joy" for evermore!

So thought one—wholly unconscious of her own worth—who was treading her quiet way, not long since, through the labyrinths of the Seven Dials. It was Sunday morning, when shops ought to have been

shut and labour stilled, and all hearts turned to their first greatest duties of religion. Not far off, the third Mass of the morning was going on; the Angels were gathered round the sanctuary, and all heads were bent to adore their approaching God. There the few faithful worshippers felt over again the beauty of the old Hebrew words: "The Lord is in His holy place; let all the earth keep silence before Him." They knew that the hush of all human thoughts, passions, and desires, best prepared the soul to welcome and receive His gift; and there, at least, was a little Sabbath, the truest rest on earth of the people of God.

The outside of life was different. Men and women, in every variety of dirty and scarcely decent slovenliness, were chaffering over their goods, wrangling, shouting, blaspheming, and pouring out filthy words and as odious laughter. Great boys were exchanging rude jests and blows with young girls, from whom every trace of girlhood had departed; and the whole air was full of foul scents of coarse tobacco and spirits, un-drained alleys, and houses and people innocent of pure water and soap.

"Take care of yourself!" exclaimed an uncombed boy to a girl, who would have been exceedingly handsome if it had not been for a fixed and brazen expression, and many shades of dirt. "Take care of yourself, pretty Nell! you'll be getting the small-pox soon, and then your fine face may go begging!"

"What's that to you, you thundering bosthoon!" screamed back the girl, her eyes flashing, and her hands clenched. "I'll *not* have the small-pox, I say! 'Tis the old, and the children, and the starving, that get it!"

“ And how about those that drink, pretty Nelly? What did the doctor say at Mick Coonan’s inquest? You heard it, I know, though you drank none the less afterwards at the ‘ Cock and Pin.’ ”

The girl uttered a frightful curse, or rather, in the very act of uttering it, when a hand was laid gently on her lips, and a low voice said: “ Oh! Nelly, Nelly! on Sunday morning, and such words!”

The girl turned quickly at the sound of the voice, and her face changed from furious to half-ashamed. “ Sister! ” she said, “ I did not know the likes of you was by me; they keep on bating and angering me always! ”

“ You should not do it, Dennis Keegan,” said the same sweet voice again. “ Go away now, like a good lad, and think about going to High Mass. That is your last chance to-day, for I am sure you have not been.”

“ And that’s true for you, Sister; and indeed its long since I *did* go. I was out all night, too, and up late this morning.”

“ I know,” quietly replied the same voice; “ but there must come an end to that. You may get the small-pox as well as Nell, and instead of making jokes about it for others, you had better get ready yourself. If you died of it, Dennis, where would you stand? Death comes *once*.”

The boy’s face changed. He had often heard these words, or something like them, before, and they had never checked a career of vice, carried on from the age of eight years. Now the idea seemed to strike him as fresh and new. Death must come, and it must come once. And after death——? He walked slowly away.

"Where are you going, Sister?" said Nell. "Could you look in at mother to-day? She is very bad."

"I will if I can; if not, I will come to-morrow," replied the Sister. "I have some bad cases in Little Crown Court just now, and they will take up some time."

"Little Crown Court!" exclaimed Nell in dismay—"why, Sister, that is where the small-pox is so bad!"

"For that very reason I am going there," replied the Sister, smiling and gathering her cloak round her. "And now Nelly, my child, remember this Sunday morning. Perhaps you may never see another. *Have you made up your accounts?*"

The girl said nothing, but grasping at the corner of the Sister's cloak as she passed, gave it a rapid, passionate kiss, and then turned away up the narrow court, and was lost to sight.

She whom they had called "Sister," and who justly merited the title by her brotherly love towards her neighbour, did not, however, belong to any religious community. Miss Turvile was at the head of a Guild, called the Guild of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary, whose members bound themselves chiefly to the service of the sick poor, but who visited also the sick of other classes, if their services or visits were desired. Being thus volunteers in the great army of charity, they were free from the restrictions and difficulties of a fixed rule, and held themselves at the disposal of the parish priest, to go wherever they were most needed for the time. Some of them were ladies, some dressmakers, or work-women, some widows of a lower class still, some young women who had been received for this special work into the House, called St. Martha's Home, where the

permanent members resided. Some of the members, therefore, were wholly devoted to this service; others only for a set portion of time, according to the circumstances of their lives; but whatever class of society they belonged to, or whatever their labour might be, they all did what they could for the sick. All called one another "Sister" at their meetings, and in their work; and, without affectation or restraint, were all looked upon as equal members of the Guild, obeying their Warden as far as the work went, and the rules of the House when there. The lady who was now going to Little Crown Court, was free from all home ties, and in consequence of this fact, and her long experience among the poor, had been chosen Warden of the Guild.

She walked on, gently avoiding contact with the worst and most ribald of the throng, sometimes fixing her clear eyes upon a drunkard or blasphemer, but generally looking a little down, and carrying such music in her heart\* as drowned the unseemly sounds of that dreadful place. She turned off at the entry of a foul court, at the portals of which† stood a gin-palace, and a pawnshop on either hand—the one to find food for the other, that both might the more quickly make an end of the soul. For, never let any one believe that poverty, as a general rule, frequents or feeds the pawnshop. It is not the industrious poor labourer, who has a cracked teapot full of pawntickets on his chimney-piece. They are the accursed fruits of gin, and richly deserve the name once given them, Notes of the Devil's Bank.

Sister Lettice sighed as she saw the noisy, wrangling

\* Keble's Christian Year.

† "Alton Locke."

crowd through the half-opened doors, but she could now only hasten on her way, putting up the fervent prayer, "Deliver us from evil." She stopped at a door nearly at the end of the court, and went up the narrow, creaking, dilapidated stairs. On the second floor she paused, knocked, and opened a door. The foulest smells greeted her entrance into the dark and crowded room.

"My child," she said, half choking, "you forget what I told you must be done; you *must* have air, or you cannot possibly get well."

She went to the window, but the lower half would not go up, and the upper one as obstinately refused to come down. A feeble voice came from the bed: "I ha' spoke to our landlord about it till I'm sick. He wo'nt do a ha'porth for us!"

The Sister took a stout knife out of her pocket, and a stick of firewood from a corner, and at length succeeded in raising and propping the lower half of the window. She then took a bottle of disinfecting fluid from her bag, and plentifully sprinkled the room and bed. The effects were quickly perceivable in dispersing the foul air. She then went to the bedside. It was a terrible sight. The poor woman's face was a mass of pustules, and had not been washed for several days. The sheets were nearly black, and a black stuff quilted coverlet outside the dingy bed clothes, smelt very abominably. There was no use in worrying the sick woman now with admonitions, so Sister Lettice contented herself with shaking her head, looking very grave the while, and beckoned to the girl who sat cowering in a corner. "Come, Katie, go and get a bucket of good hot water, and some cloths; and have you any sheets but those on the bed?"

"No, Sister," replied the girl, in a thick, hoarse voice. "We had a pair, but father pawned them away."

"Never mind, now. Have you the ticket for them?"

"Yes, Sister," said Katie, brightening up. "Here it is in the jug."

"Go down first to the pawnshop, and ask whether they are gone or not. How much were they in for?"

"Three shillings," replied Katie. The Sister took the money out of her purse. Before giving it to the child, she said to the sick woman: "My child, if you were not so very ill, nothing should make me do this. I never, as a rule, help any one to get anything out of pawn. I believe the habit of pawning to be next bad to a habit of drinking. Remember, that we lend linen from lending bags at the Home. This time I will do it, because we are in great need."

Away ran Katie, and soon returned triumphant, bringing a pair of decently clean sheets with her. Meanwhile, the Sister had become aware that the filthy bedding swarmed with vermin, and the case was evidently too bad for clean sheets to mend. She went out, first bidding Katie fill the kettle, and set it on the fire, and make the fire up well. She soon returned, with a strong, useful-looking woman, a good sack-ing filled with chaff, and a couple of blankets. These last were lent. The Sister then took a strong knitted hospital bandage from her bag, and passing part of it under the shoulders, and part under the hips of the sick woman, she was lifted lightly from her bed, and laid in the blankets on the sack-ing. The whole of the old bedding was then quickly thrown out into the court, when the sheets and blankets were put into a

pail of boiling water. The bedding was put away to be burned. Sister Lettice arranged the bedstead, and replaced the sick woman upon it. Next she was lightly lifted up, the ragged night-dress taken off, and a clean one put on. The ragged garment was put at once on the fire. Katie was then dispatched for a handful of soda, and the amazed girl was told to wash the floor.

“Are you not afraid, Sister, and she so bad?” inquired the able-bodied woman? “Sure enough, its mucky; but I thought when the pock was out, there could not be too much care for heat.”

“Yes, that is the miserable old notion, which has killed so many,” replied the Sister. “I assure you there is no cure so effectual as cleanliness and air. She would never have been so bad had it not been for the dirt of this place. It is really a kind of madness to let dirt heap up as you all do, for every speck of dirt and dust helps to make foul air, and as soon as that is breathed into the body, it helps to make sickness, or to make it worse. And now, Mrs. Sullivan, you will be more astonished still; but we must wash this poor woman’s face and hands at least. Her skin is so clogged that she is a trouble to herself. Will you get me some of that water off the fire, and wash out this basin quite clean.”

Mrs. Sullivan immediately did as she was asked, for she and all the neighbours round had implicit faith in “the Sister,” and her firm but gentle requests were generally granted with cheerful readiness. The basin was really cleansed for the first time for many a day; the clean water, nearly boiling, was poured into it; and Sister Lettice produced from her endless bag a small soft sponge and towel. A portion of good, pure soap was

rubbed on the sponge, and the sick woman soon presented a different appearance. The cleansing process appeared to give her great relief. The Sister then cut all the sick woman's hair, except two long locks in front, which, with the whole head, she combed and cleansed. This was not a pleasant operation, and Mrs. Sullivan could not repress several urgent expostulations at the office the sister had taken on herself.

"Blessed be God for all His mercies!" at length ejaculated the good woman. "And now, Sister, what shall I be to give her to eat and drink till you come again?"

"What is there in the cupboard?"

"Then little else but nothing, Sister, bless the hearers! There's tea and bread, and her little snuff, and that's all."

"She can have tea when she likes; but you must come to St. Martha's dispensary for some groats and arrowroot, or sago. Do you know how to boil sago?"

"No, Sister; I cannot say I ever much handled it at all."

"But you must learn these things, my child; you will soon be a good nurse if you give your mind to a few simple things. I believe I have enough here to show you. I never go out without either that or arrowroot. Is there a pan or saucepan to cook it in?"

"May the Lord be praised!" softly ejaculated the good woman. "Here is a decent saucepan, if it was but clean!"

Some of the all-useful soda was put into hot water, and the saucepan became cleansed. It was then filled with cold water, and the sago dropped gently into it, and it was set on the fire to boil, while Mrs. Sullivan and the Sister stirred it by turns. In rather more than

twenty minutes it boiled, and had thoroughly swelled. Mrs. Sullivan was highly delighted with this success; and when she had well washed a cup and spoon, and the Sister had put into it a half slice of lemon and some sugar, and poured the boiling sago over it, she declared it was "fit for Queen Victoria and all her court."

Having seen the sick woman take some with evident relish, Sister Lettice left strict orders with Mrs. Sullivan to keep up the fire, to have water always boiling, and the window or door propped open, and then bade them good-bye. Before doing so, she leaned over the sick woman, and said: "My child, have you sent for the priest? Has Father Barrow been to you at all?"

Mrs. Coonan shook her head. "Sister, I'll not tell you a lie; I have not kneeled to a priest this long while."

"How long, my child?"

"Sister, it is nine years come Easter."

"Well, my child, if it were nineteen instead of nine years, our Lord would be ready to come and meet you, and forgive you all. Will you stay away from Him now, when He has sent this sickness on purpose to remind you of His love? Would you like me to ask Father Barrow to come and talk to you a little?"

"Yes, Sister; but, oh! I do be so ashamed."

"My child, we all need to be ashamed. But that must not hinder us from doing what is right. You know you are very ill. If you were to die, having been brought up in your own country as a good Catholic, you would be more ashamed to die without your priest."

"Oh, its true, Sister! Sure I would not have come to this at home. I'll see him, Sister. God bless you for ever, and may he be blessed that sent you like an angel to me!"

The Sister softly withdrew. She felt that the sickness had been indeed an angel recalling this poor lost and strayed sheep, and she lifted up her heart in fervent praise.

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## CHAPTER II.



HE had not gone the length of the street, when the young girl Nell came flying after her, clasping her hands, and nearly breathless with haste. "Oh, Sister, Sister, for the love of God, come into Lane-court! Little Dan Houlahan is so badly burnt! His poor mother does be almost raving mad!"

The Sister instinctively turned, and with surprising quickness glided after Nell, who turned into a wretched little narrow entry, on the opposite side of the way to Little Crown Court. It was of course choked with people; blouzy, undressed women and men, with short pipes in their mouths, pushing and vociferating, and apparently scolding each other to the best of their strength, doing everything they best could to make a disorder and hinder operations in general. They were amazed when Sister Lettice penetrated their ranks, and in a clear, commanding voice bade them go out of the court, and leave her free to do her work. She told them that it was her business and not theirs, and that if they disobeyed and hindered the child's cure, she should wash her hands of them all, and work in another parish. As soon as she had finished speaking, they

melted away like a snowball, without murmur or resistance, and in a few minutes the little court was emptied of all but two boys, whom the Sister retained in case messengers should be wanted. Policeman D, No. 137, who had been for some time vainly trying to make an impression, looked at the Sister with great respect, and turning to No. 152, who kept him company, said solemnly: "Blowed if I ever see the likes of that! Blest if she ought not to be taken on by Sir Richard for hextrornary service!" And No. 152 replied in equally solemn strain: "Which she undoubtedly might, and rank as A 1."

The Sister, all unconscious of the possible prospective honours in store for her, had turned rapidly into the house where the burnt child lay, for Nell had waited at the door while she dismissed the crowd. She found the child laid on the miserable bed, his clothes burnt to tinder, and the whole side of his arm and head a frightful charred sore. Water had been thrown over him while burning, which had increased the pain ten-fold, and he moaned and shrieked with the intense agony of the nerves exposed to the raw air. Sister Lettice hastily made the sign of the cross, and put up a fervent prayer. She had never seen so bad a burn, and it was impossible to handle it without inflicting terrible pain. She sent Nell out for a large feather, and as it was Sunday, she returned with a quill pen, the best feather that was to be had. The Sister then dexterously cut round the jagged remains of the shirt sleeve that still adhered, and drew it from the arm. She also softly cut away all the frizzled mat of hair from the head, and taking a bottle of castor-oil from her bag, she poured some of it into a clean saucer, and

with the feather spread it as lightly as possible over the whole sore. Even with her exquisite lightness and tenderness of hand, the operation gave great pain, but the relief afterwards was evident. The oil effectually closed up the raw flesh from the air, and the throbbing nerves were relieved. As soon as this was done, the Sister dispatched one of the waiting boys to a chemist's for some cotton-wool, which she spread lightly over the whole, and bound up the arm. Having left her bottle of castor-oil with Mrs. Houlahan, with a strict charge to renew the dressing with the feather in the same manner, Sister Lettice went her way, promising to call in the evening, and bring something that could not be procured in that quarter.\*

By this time the Sister began to feel rather painfully the effects of the foul air and close courts. She felt in her bag, and took out a piece of wood charcoal, which she put into her mouth. By slowly reducing it to powder and swallowing it, she found every effect of the close rooms removed. Tired as she was, she resolved to see Nell's mother before she went home. The one hope, the one chord, the one soft spot in the poor girl's heart, was her love for her aged mother, whose life she had embittered, whose heart she had nearly broken by her wild and headlong career. Sister Lettice now beckoned to Nell to follow her, and said she was going to her home.

Her home! You who know what a home is, and ought to be, who have been carefully and tenderly

\* She did go, and took with her the remedy, which was collodion. As it is not always obtainable, and spoils by keeping, it is not mentioned in the text; but its effects in healing and removing pain in burns and severe wounds is marvellous.

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whom she principally worked, had long tried to persuade her to go to the neighbouring hospital, where she would have the best advice and care; but the poor woman resisted. Wretched and suffering as was her state, she preferred it to leaving Nell. Out of that bundle of rags and sores, there breathed a love heroic in its strength.

“Sister,” she had replied, “as long as I stay here, Nelly will not go altogether to the bad; but I dread the day when I am laid in the ground. If she has no other friend, she will go off altogether on a wicked course, and then who will bring her back? I will stay here, as long as body and soul will hold together, to make a little home for Nelly.”

“Nelly, my child,” were the Sister’s first words after her examination, “you have neglected to wash your mother’s sores; you really must do it, or we shall fall out. Get me, now, some quite hot water out of the kettle, and cut me a thick slice of bread, all crumb, and bring it with a saucer and basin.”

The Sister carefully washed Mrs. Hennessy’s back, during which her murmurs and grumblings sufficiently explained Nell’s difficulties in the office, and then she began to make a large poultice for it. She laid the bread in the basin with some boiling water, and covered it with the saucer; in a little while the bread had sucked up all the water, and swelled to twice its size. The Sister folded and wrung it lightly in a cloth, and laid it in a piece of very soft, thin muslin she had with her. She folded the corners of the muslin over on one side, so that the other was perfectly smooth. When this was laid over the sores, it gave immediate relief. Sister Lettice then spoke seriously and quietly to Nell,

charging her to wash her mother's back in a day or two, with quite cold water, which, when the skin was healed, would harden it. She gave her a little money, and told her to buy a box of elder ointment for a few pence at the chemists, and to put some of it every day on the part as long as it continued sore. Nell was also bidden to go to St. Martha's Home for some bed linen from the lending bags, and to ask to see her at the same time.

It was now absolutely necessary to take a little rest, and Sister Lettice was glad to ring at the door of a large house in Soho-square. The door was opened by a neat girl, dressed in dark blue woollen stuff, with a little cap and collar as white as snow. She smiled a glad smile when she saw who it was.

“Oh! Mother, I am so glad you are come home, there's so many wants to see you, and Dr. Harley is here; but Sister Alice says you are to have your dinner first, come what may. The Sisters have dined, and the ladies had their lunch, and your dinner is all hot and ready.”

“Very well, Cecil, obedience is a prince of virtues; I will have my dinner: but I think I shall eat more and stay longer at it if you bring Dr. Harley with it.”

The dinner accordingly came, and shortly after Dr. Harley, who took his chair, and said pleasantly, that a roasted potatoe was a very good thing, and he thought he would have one. Soon afterwards: “I looked in to-day, Sister, to ask you to do one or two things for me. One is to pay a visit out of your beat, but I think you will not mind. It is a bad case—congestion of the lungs and inflammation, and I want a good blister put on. The boy has no one with him but a bedridden aunt and an occasional neighbour. The aunt would

not go to the workhouse, and now we cannot move the boy. It would be a real charity if you went there a few times.

"I shall be glad," replied the Sister, "because you know I am specially bound to look after your cases. Is the boy a Catholic?"

"Ought to be—I fancy a thorough heathen. This is the address. The other thing I have at heart is a lady in Newman-street. She has bad scarlet fever and throat, which has driven every one out of the house. I know nothing of the nurse, except that she seems slovenly and ignorant. The poor lady is in reduced circumstances, and cannot afford much, and Mr. Barrow tells me she has been very careless in religious matters. Will you undertake to see after her?"

"Certainly, if you will write down her address with the other. Have you seen the new Sisters, and are they satisfactory?"

"I have seen them. They appear to have a notion of work. You should always take one with you when you do not go to the worst small-pox cases."

"I have done so. To-day they went with Sister Elizabeth and Sister Mary. They have most of them seen a good deal of sickness, and have a love for their work. Do you know we are now twelve in the Home?"

"We grow proud," replied Dr. Harley, smiling. "I will come on Friday, and examine more siftingly. Do not be in a hurry to fill the house. There are many women who will be useful when trained; but train a few thoroughly first, and they will soon form others. Now you must look after yourself, if you please, and take a good rest. Good morning."

Constant to his habit of few words and to the point,

Dr. Harley departed after saying his say; and Sister Lettice, equally constant to hers of *doing what she was doing*, finished her dinner without haste, and then went into the little oratory to make her *examen* of the morning's work, and the spirit in which it was done. As three incurable patients were permanently lodged in the house, and in consideration of the number of women and girls received, the Archbishop had kindly given leave for the Blessed Sacrament to be kept in it; and it was from this source that the whole Guild, both outdoor and indoor members, drew that fervent charity which animated their life and labours. Here they besought help before going forth into the lanes and courts; here they returned to report to their Master what had been done, and to number up their failures; here they laid down their burthens, and rested upon the great Physician, who alone holds healing in His hands. And here now the meek Warden bent her head; and while she raised her heart in thankfulness for being shown how to serve God in His poor, prayed fervently for more helpers, more labourers in the enormous field, saying again and again: "Lord, who in Thy tender love didst pity the scattered multitude in the desert of Judea, because they were as sheep having no shepherd, look down upon this great city: gather the sick and faint of soul into Thy Sacred Heart! Mother of the Sorrowful Heart, who didst by thy pleading hasten the "hour" of thy Divine Son, plead now for thy sick and sorrowing children in this city. Speak a good word for us, mother, that we perish not!"

## CHAPTER III.



IT was late in the afternoon before Sister Lettice had arranged the several matters requiring her attention. One of the incurable inmates had to be visited, and various things done for her relief. One or two Sisters and outdoor members had to receive some instruction upon their duties before they went out, and the visits of others to the sick had to be a little varied, several letters to be answered. The coppery sun was slowly going down, and throwing his slanting crimson rays across the hazy parks, for the benefit of those who were loitering away the vacant hours of amusement, when the unwearied helper of the sick poor again set out on her rounds. If nothing more were done, she thought, the blister must be put on Dr. Harley's patient, and there would be that to offer to God before going to rest. With her usual swift but quiet steps she treaded the maze of crooked streets between St. Giles' and Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in a narrow, dirty lane, found the court she sought. The costermongers were now come home for their tea, and the court was filled with their barrows and carts, so that there was no difficulty in finding where poor Val Lenahan lived. The moment they knew that it was a good "Sister" come to see him, a dozen eager voices volunteered information, and offered to pioneer the way up the broken stairs. A

kind, burly man made the children “whisht, while he spoke to their betters;” two boys hastily moved an oyster-barrow out of the doorway, and another big lad ran before her up stairs, carefully showing the broken rail and the “bad bit that was broken in,” and, with a beaming and respectful face, said, if she wanted anything got from the shop, he, Mike Dolan, was ready to run for her to Mile End. She stopped to ask him a few questions and say a few kind, cordial words about himself, and then knocked and went into the sick room. Yes, how well she knew the familiar look, the familiar smell of that fetid room. The floor unwashed, unswept; the tattered, filthy bedding; the broken, clumsy, unsuitable wooden bed; the loathsome insects, born of neglect and dirt; the untended body of the sick boy. Why is it, what persistent madness is it of our poor, not to see that air and water would free them from their greatest sufferings, their worst diseases, the most terrible scourges of their lives?

Sister Lettice hastily put a piece of charcoal into her mouth, and went to the boy’s bedside. She could not at first discern which of the beds contained him, and which his bedridden aunt. The laboured, heavy breathing, rather than her eyes, decided the point. The boy’s lungs were frightfully oppressed, his eyes red and nearly closed, his whole face distorted with pain and fever. She propped open the cobwebbed, darkened window, and went quickly downstairs to the next floor. “Mike,” she cried—“Mike Dolan, is there any woman here who would come and help me with this poor boy?”

He came running up the stairs. “Yes, sure, Sister! there’s my own sister-in-law, a very clean, decent woman

she is; will I be to send her, Sister, and try will she do?"

"Yes, Mike, please do, and tell her you know that Val's illness is not catching."

"Oh! sure and I will, Sister, and thank you kindly!" Away he ran, and soon ushered upstairs a strong, tidy young woman, who looked willing to do all that the Sister could possibly require, if good will could accomplish arduous tasks.

"Is this Mrs. Dolan?" pleasantly asked Sister Lettice. "Mrs. Dolan, what are we to do with this poor boy? He cannot stay on this miserable bed. Can you make out whether there are any sheets to be had? There seems no press or anything to keep them in."

Mrs. Dolan then vigorously attacked the deaf, bed-ridden aunt, and made out, to her joy, that there were sheets in a box under her bed. The box was dragged to light from the dust and fluff where it lay (a wonder it was that some fever had not swept the whole household away), and in it were found a pair of coarse sheets and another blanket, probably laid by for the uses of death. Sister Lettice and the good woman then rolled the sick boy gently into one of his own black ones, put under him the knitted bandage, and lifted him tenderly on to the sacking they had laid by the fire. They then turned out everything but the straw-filled sacking, which they turned and sprinkled copiously with disinfecting fluid. They spread the blanket double, stripped him of his ragged filthy shirt, and slipped on a clean warm one. Then they lifted him gently back into the bed, washed his hands and face, and cut off his hair. The blister was taken out and cut to the right shape; and while she was doing this, Sister Lettice sent Mrs.

Dolan for some oranges she had seen on a barrow below, and directed her to peel and slice a couple, and lay them in a clean jug, with some coarse brown sugar. Boiling water was poured on to the top of the jug, and a saucer placed on the top. A few drops of vinegar were poured on the middle of the blister, and it was laid on the boy's chest. It very soon began to sting and draw, and the Sister sat down beside him, and began to talk soothingly and pleasantly, to induce him to bear the pain. Bit by bit, with difficulty, and amid his impatient tossings to and fro, she drew from him some details of his wild Arab life: how he had sold watercresses, and been a shoe-black, and from that joined a band of youthful "priggers," who lived by picking pockets and street pilfering. All recollections of religion, all vestiges of morality, seemed swept away out of his mind, if ever they had been planted in it. Once or twice he remembered going to Father Barrow's school, where the boys laughed at him because of his dirt and ignorance. If there had been a night school he should have tried to go. He never went any more, and his aunt could not make him. He grew stronger and bigger, and more reckless and bad, and resolved to work out his wild boy's will. He had not been to Mass for nine years, and scarcely remembered what the chapel was like. He had never been to confession or Communion. He only knew he was a Catholic, and that it was a dreadful thing for a Catholic to leave his faith. Upon this single foundation-stone, the only foothold rising above all this desolate waste of waters, Sister Lettice was fain to rest, praying most fervently that if poor Val's life were saved, he might be snatched from utter wreck.

Meanwhile she calmed his impatience and furious words, and cooled him with orange-drink, and soothed him with pleasant words and sweet snatches of hymns, by which the boy seemed fascinated and lulled. When she thought the blister had been on long enough, which she knew by its being ready to come off, and Val turned very sick and faint, she gave him a glass of salvolatile (thirty drops), and water and a little brandy, and then gently peeled off the blister. It had drawn very well. Mrs. Dolan was set to making a nice large bread-and-water poultice, to be carefully mixed, and beaten in a cloth till quite soft; and then the Sister took a small pair of scissors out of her bag, and carefully snipped the raised skin of the bladder where it was fullest. She took the greatest precaution, in doing this, not to touch any but the raised skin, lest a sore should follow. Under the cut part she spread a thick layer of soft rag to suck up the moisture, which flowed freely from the blister. It was very well managed. As soon as it had ceased to run, the Sister took up the poultice, and spread it softly over the whole part drawn; it seemed to give immediate ease, and to relieve the difficulty of breathing. She left a box of common lard ointment with Mrs. Dolan, instructing her to put it on as soon as the poultice was taken off. She also mixed a table-spoonful of castor-oil with water and a little brandy, for Val to take early in the morning. At present, as it was likely he might get a little sleep, it was better to keep him as quiet as possible.

Sister Lettice then went to examine the bedridden aunt. She, like Mrs. Hennessy, was suffering from long-neglected sores. These she washed and poulticed,

leaving dressing and rags for them, and had the satisfaction of leaving both these poor sufferers in comparative ease. The poor woman lifted up her hands, and rained down a shower of blessings upon the Sister, who, after saying some prayers with her, bade her good night and went her way, hoping to get to the church in time for Vespers and Benediction.

The streets were lit up, and thronged with the idlers and loungers of Sunday in a populous quarter. A broad glare streamed across the pavement from each public-house, and sounds of singing, and coarse words and laughter, streamed out with the flaring light. The wintry stars looked down upon the huge city, licentious and nearly as heathen as Babylon the Great, seeming with their solemn eyes to plead, as formerly the Chaldean patriarch pleaded with his God for the Cities of the Plain.

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## C H A P T E R I V.



HE next morning, after the usual household duties were despatched, Sister Lettice got ready for a visit to the lady in Newman-street. As it was a bad fever case she went alone, and on coming to the place, and ringing one of a series of bell-handles, a slipshod woman slowly opened the door a little way, and looked out.

“Does Mrs. Selby live here?”

"Yes, she does; but she is very ill now, and can't see any one."

"Are you the nurse?"

"Well, I be; but she is so very bad, and so tiresome-like, that I don't think of staying much longer."

"Oh! but I think you will. I am the lady from St. Martha's Home, that Dr. Harley was to send to see Mrs. Selby, and I should like to go upstairs."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, ma'am, I did not know. Please to walk up."

They went up stairs, and after the nurse had been in and told Mrs. Selby that the Sister had called, she was ushered into the hot, stifling room. "Surely," it crossed her mind—"surely it is utterly vain to speak or to write words of warning and common sense to *any* class of persons about the proper treatment of the sick. Every one, high or low, seems to dread fresh air and pure water as their two greatest enemies." The poor lady was evidently very ill. Her face was scarlet, her eyes swollen and heavy, her breathing very bad, and all her discomfort was augmented by a quantity of bed-clothes, curtains, a carpet all over the room, and a manifest want of sweeping, dusting, and airing. Two tables were strewed with plates, cups, and glasses, all unwashed, and with remains of something in them. There was no fresh water in the jug or carafe, and the grate was filled with the ashes of slothful neglect. Sister Lettice hastily rinsed out her own mouth with vinegar, and swallowed a few drops, and then spoke gently and pleasantly to the lady, begging her not to answer if it gave her pain. As soon as she saw that she understood who she was, she sent the nurse down with a tray of plates and glasses, took off her bonnet and cloak, and

began to put the room quietly to rights. She then sat down by the bedside, and said: "My dear madam, I think you are well aware that Dr. Harley would not have sent me here if he had not had confidence in my knowing something of disease. We are all accustomed to work under the direction of medical men in the hospitals, and have gained some experience in difficult cases. Have you any objection to my speaking to you very plainly, and making some changes in your treatment?"

Sister Lettice had a remarkably pleasant, low, clear voice, and sick people could hear every word she said without being irritated by loud talking.

"Do what you like," replied the lady. "I am very ill, and I think I am getting worse. I can't bear that dirty, untidy woman." She spoke in a fretful, impatient way, and with great difficulty.

"You must not say a word more than can be avoided," replied the Sister quietly, but firmly, "and you will please not think about the nurse, or anything else that worries you. I think I can help to make you a little more comfortable, if you will have confidence in me; and you must recollect," she added, smiling, "that my orders must be obeyed, for I am like Louis Quatorze: 'Quand je règne, je règnerais.'"<sup>\*</sup>

Mrs. Selby had lived many years in France, and the sound of the familiar tongue was pleasant to her. She smiled a little, and said: "Do as you please; I like you."

Sister Lettice then went away, and looked into another room on the same floor. It was small and close. She went down stairs, and found that the two drawing-

\* "When I reign, I will reign."

rooms were empty. She then quickly sought the nurse, and asked if she knew what the rent was. She named one that was comparatively low. The whole house, in fact, was unlet, for the last lodger had fled in fear when Mrs. Selby grew very ill. The Sister felt sure that by Dr. Harley's influence, the committee of St. Martha's would pay the rent, at least for a while, and she set the charwoman, who had come in to clean below, to scour the two rooms out immediately. First, she sent her out for soda and flannels, hunted up some brushes, and in a short time established the good, strong Irishwoman in a black and white sea on the floor. She herself made a fine fire, and opened the windows, so that the floor dried nearly as soon as it was scrubbed. She and Biddy then "rooted" out a piece of Indian matting, and put that down in the middle of the back room. The next thing was to find an iron bedstead, which was discovered in a servant's room upstairs, taken down, and reconstructed in a space of time incredible to Biddy, who kept up a running fire of "Lord save us all!" "God bless the hearers!" "The Lord betune us and harm!" and by her shrewd remarks, obliged the Sister more than once to give up work, and fairly sit down to laugh.

The room looked and felt very pleasant when they had done their work, and the floor was already perfectly dry. Then Sister Lettice returned to Mrs. Selby's room, and found the nurse just preparing to give her a cup full of dark, greasy fluid, which she called beef-tea.

"Oh! nurse, I do not think that looks very tempting," said she, pleasantly.

"Well, ma'am, I don't fancy it myself; but lor! you can't have a thing done as should be 'ere for a sick person."

"Are you a good cook yourself, nurse?"

"No, ma'am; I'm sorry to say I aint. I can fry or broil anything nice enough, but I never did take to slops and sich like."

"Well, some time when you are not busy, you must come down into the kitchen with me, and I will show you how to make nicer beef-tea than this. But I really think you must not give it her now; she is too feverish. I will go down and make her a light pudding."

She went down, and dispatched the charwoman for a little good milk or cream, if it was to be had, and a packet of corn-flour. Then she took a few spoonfuls of the flour, and mixed it very smoothly with a little cold water, and then with the cream, beating it up well. She sugared it, put in some lemon, and set it in a strong basin in the oven to bake. When it was done, a small pudding of inviting appearance was turned out, which she took up stairs. The sick lady eat it all, declaring she had never tasted anything decently made since she had been ill. This success emboldened the Sister to propose to Mrs. Selby to allow herself to be moved. She consented, and was soon wrapped in blankets, two strong bandages were slipped round her hips and arms, and giving the upper one to the nurse, the Sister took the lower one herself, with Biddy. They went slowly and carefully downstairs, and finally laid her softly on the curtainless iron bed, which had been newly made. The cool, fresh cleanliness of the room seemed to give pleasure to the invalid; but she asked languidly if she was to have no carpet on the floor.

"Not as long as I am here," replied the Sister, smiling; "but you will find it much sweeter and more wholesome. We shall have it swept every morning,

and refreshed with a damp cloth. You have no idea how unwholesome a carpet is in any sickness, especially where there is fever; and whenever it is swept, a cloud of woollen particles are breathed into the lungs. Now I must beg you to rest yourself, and talk no more, and your throat must be steamed with hot vinegar."

For this purpose, a large teapot full of vinegar was set upon a little stand, in which a spirit-lamp was lit. The tea-pot and the lady were carefully surrounded by a kind of tent, made of a large woollen shawl; and, after inhaling the steam for a quarter of an hour, the breathing was sensibly relieved. She then lay down, and fell into the first refreshing sleep she had yet enjoyed.

As soon as she saw this, Sister Lettice beckoned the nurse into the front room, gave her a few plain directions, slipped some money into her hand to enforce their execution, and feeling herself by this time thoroughly fatigued, she returned to St. Martha's to try and get a little rest.

Much was not to be had. Dinner was secured, and the half hour after it was spent pleasantly in hearing the younger Sisters talk. Then the side door bell rang with a strong pull, and the door-keeper came in to say that a poor boy wanted to see the Mother directly. Somebody she knew of was very ill. Sister Lettice immediately went out to the vestibule, and saw Dennis Keegan, the boy who had so angered Nell, and who, alas! had been the familiar companion of two years of her evil life. "Oh! Sister," he exclaimed, nearly breathless with haste and grief—"Sister! Nell is took bad! I think it is the small-pox! She is raving for you! Do come, Sister, for the love of God!"

"I will go with you now," she replied. "Come in here and wait for me. And remember, Dennis, *here* is the very Presence of our Lord. Come in, and though you have offended Him, ask Him to forgive you, and to take care of Nelly." She opened a door hung with a thick soft mat, and drew the excited boy inside; when after kneeling a few moments herself, she left him to prepare for another sick visit. The needful things were soon collected, some directions left with Sister Elizabeth, and she was ready. After kneeling for an instant beside Dennis, who was nearly prostrate before the altar, they left the Home, and treaded the narrow streets between it and the court in which Nelly lived. It was quite true. In those few hours the fatal disease, now raging like a plague, had struck deep roots into the fevered, overexcited frame. Nell's face was spotted and livid; her eyes nearly closed, and terribly swollen; her head was racked with pain and approaching delirium. Sister Lettice opened the window and sprinkled the bed, and, stooping down, said gently, but clearly: "Nelly, my child, I am here—have you anything you would like to say to me?" The poor girl shivered, and opened her heavy eyes. "Sister! Is it Sister? I can't see who it is! Are you really come to me?"

"Yes, I am come—what should you like to tell me?"

"Death comes *once*," muttered the girl. "You said that the other morning. It seems years since you said it; but I have heard nothing else since. Oh! I cannot, I cannot, I *will* not die! It is too horrible to die so young and strong! It is very cruel, very hard; I hate it! Do let me live, Sister! Make me well! Don't let me die and be lost for ever!"

She clung fast to Sister Lettice's arm, as if to ward

off some danger she alone could see. "Nelly! Nelly! You do not know what you are saying. I will not hear such things. You must *not* say them. Say, 'My God, I take this for my sins!' 'My God, forgive me my sins!' 'Thy holy will be done!' 'Have mercy upon me, for Thy mercy's sake!'"

"Mercy! O Sister, mercy to *live*! I don't want any other! Only let me live! If I can but live and get well!"

"If you do live and get well, my child, what will you promise to God?"

"O Sister, to live better; to live like a Catholic girl, as you have always told me! I will, I will! You don't know what I have learned and seen since I lay here." "Oh!" she exclaimed, shuddering, and with a kind of gasping shriek. "Oh! perhaps it is too late! I see the fire of hell all round the bed! O Sister, save me, save me!"

She fell back exhausted, but still firmly grasping the corner of the Sister's cloak, which she had caught in the clutch of agony. Dennis stood, half within, half without the door, pale and trembling with fear and horror. Yet the Sister felt glad that the knowledge of her intense sufferings were fully made known to him. "Dennis," she said softly, "the wages of sin are *death*—death, not of the body, but everlasting death to the soul. Now you see what it would be to die in mortal sin."

"O Sister!" he exclaimed, in a husky voice, and as if his lips were too stiff to move—"Sister, I will do anything in the world I can. I will leave off my bad life; I will try indeed. Oh! will I run and tell the priest to come and see her now?"

"Yes, my child; you can take a card from me." Sister Lettice hastily wrote a few words in pencil on one of her cards, and bade Dennis run with it as quickly as he could to Mr. Barrow, and if he were not in, he was to ask for one of the other priests to come and see Nell for a minute.

In a little while, during which the Sister was occupied in making up the fire and "straightening" the room, the doorway was darkened by a substantial figure, and a hearty but subdued voice said: "Well, Sister, this is a bad business; I am sorry the plague has spread into another court; but God will work good out of it for more than one soul."

"For two at least, I much hope," replied the Sister, in a low voice. "I will go upstairs to the next floor, Father, while you speak to this child; and when you are ready, please call me."

It was some time before the call came, and when Sister Lettice went down, she found Mr. Barrow standing before the fire, taking a large pinch of snuff, and wiping his spectacles. "You must take care of yourself, Sister," he said, so as to be heard by her only; "this is the worst case I have seen. She will not recover. Let me know at any moment if there is a change. I will come in to-morrow to see if she can make her confession. To-day I have only prepared her a little. This is for anything she may need." He put some money into the Sister's hand, courteously lifted his hat, and was gone.

Sister Lettice went softly to the bedside. There was an evident change in that haggard and tortured face. Tears of sorrow and shame for sin had been shed; the Voice of God had spoken—the Voice that

once said: "Maiden, I say unto thee, arise;" and out of the death and stupor of deadly sin there had begun to be a resurrection to a new life. It was this pale streak of dawn, this faint smoke in the unquenched flax, which the Sister now set herself to fan, and cherish into vigorous life. If she could once make a true and hearty confession, let death come and welcome. Hers was a character of that fiery and passionate sort, which was dangerous in any class of life, but doubly so where temptations abounded, and helps were few. Still, there was youth and strength; and if life could be saved by careful nursing, it should certainly not be wanting here. It might be spent in such penance as should yet win a glorious crown.

The room was next invaded by the parish doctor, who came bustling in to see the new case of small-pox, and what was to be done. As to the small-pox hospital, that was overflowing, and even the temporary buildings were more than crowded; so he prescribed, wrote down the directions for the dispensary medicine, and had brought a bottle with him for the patient. He was an active, intelligent little man, exceedingly overworked, and always glad to see any one from St. Martha's attending his people, knowing that they would be well cared for, and his directions obeyed. He praised the ventilation of the room, promised to call again, and took his leave. The Sister went with him upstairs. He shook his head: "Bad case; very bad! Never saw a worse! Aggravated by a wild life, poor thing! Won't last long! No, my dear ma'am, I would not advise your staying. Quite useless; and you waste your valuable strength. *Good morning!*"

The Sister went slowly back to Nelly's room. Like

a strain of solemn melody, rising above the discordant din of the crowded city, the glorious words of the old Hebrew chorus rose to her mind with a new sense of refreshment and rest: "Lord, Thou hast been our Refuge from generation to generation!" Her thoughts, in a few brief moments, flew back to the loss of Paradise through the unutterable folly of man; to his confused dispersion towards the four winds of heaven; to the waste of waters strewn with the wrecks of more than a thousand years; to the utter destruction, first, of the tablets traced by the very hand of God; then, of the Temple, where His glory dwelt and lingered; then, of the city He had chosen and built up, and delighted in for Himself; to His rejection, when He came to His own, and they received Him not; to the breach and havoc made in His spouse, the Church. "Lord, what is man that Thou regardest him? Why do we always look to him, seek him, and put our trust in him, when he is nothing but a continual failure and broken reed? Oh! be Thou alone our strength, Thou indeed our Refuge, as Thou hast been of old to Thy saints, and shall be for ever!"

"Sister!"

"Yes, my child."

"I thought it must be you, and yet I thought it could not be," replied Nelly, with a faint smile. "Sure, Sister, you ought not to be spared to stay with me?"

"I wonder who wants me more," said the Sister, gently. "You must take your medicine now, child, and then I will talk to you a little." The medicine was taken with refreshing effervescent lemon-juice; and then the Sister sat down, and with gentle skill and patience, and a great deal of fatigue to herself, drew

out to Nelly the whole picture of her own life, and what she had to do to prepare for a good confession. Especially she spoke to her, in living, graphic, earnest words, mixed with short sentences of prayer, of the love of Jesus, of His life, of His own sayings, of His works among men, of His human Heart, filled with divinest love, of the charm which drew men to Him, whether they would or no, of the Voice and words which made Magdalene forget her shame, and cast herself and her sins at His sacred feet. Oh ! love passing all thoughts and words ! Oh ! why do we not give Him our hearts ?

At last the stream of sweet, slow-dropping words, literally like dew falling gently but continuously on the grass in the dark night, was cut short, by low, gasping sobs. Nelly's face was buried in her hands. Tears flowed in great drops from her swollen eyes. "O Sister, Sister ! I never knew—I never thought—I never studied that before ! Oh ! did He really do all that ? Was He *like* that ? Did He do it for me ? and I—." The bed shook with the sobs and groans of a contrite heart.

"Yes, my child," again said the sweet, low voice of the Sister ; "He did all that. He did it for you and for me ; and you and I, what have we done to Him ? We have pierced His hands and His feet ; we have wounded His heart ; we have scourged Him and crowned Him with thorns. And for all this He has loved us still ; and you, His poor lost, wandering sheep, He has run after and found—and soon He will carry you to His own home. Nelly, you *must* thank Him ; you *must* love Him with your whole heart !"

It had worn late into the night when a messenger

rang the bell at the priest's house, and brought him word that the Sister thought Nelly Hennessy was dying. Mr. Barrow soon joined the boy, holding up his hand as a sign that he had the Blessed Sacrament with him.

He found the poor little room prepared. It had been washed and made scrupulously neat. Two slender wax tapers burned on a little table, covered with a clean linen cloth. Two bunches of fresh winter-flowers shed a faint sweetness through the room. Sister Lettice first fell on her knees, devoutly adoring the Presence of her God, and then went upstairs while the confession was made. It was over now, that first and last confession of a sinful, stormy life. The burthen of nine years was laid at the feet of Christ, with sobs and bitter tears, with low wails of contrite sorrow, with deep and fervent expressions of wondering love. Sixteen years had been her whole term of life. Many convicts have not known or done as much of wrong; but few have repented as she has done. Sixteen years! How many mothers in this country are watching their girls, still childish and fresh, in their sixteen years' innocence? Girls carefully guarded from the touch of harm, shielded by every teaching of religion, by every provision of a foreseeing love; by the father's wisdom, by the mother's tenderness, by the brother's jealous care, by the prudence of the priest. And these ninety and nine He had now left in their green pastures, to come to seek and to save the one who was lost.

Yes, He has come. The thick, heavy breathing was stilled, the swollen eyes were raised in joy, as the Sister came back gently into the room; and after unfolding the clean napkin, and laying it on the sick girl's breast, knelt down and said the *Confiteor* for the priest.

“Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee.” “Depart, O Christian soul, depart to meet thy God!” Scarcely had the Viaticum been received, than the agony of death began. A severe but short struggle, for she was furnished with the Bread of Life, and death had lost both its power and its sting. Suddenly Nelly rose up in the bed, and fixed her eyes, shuddering, on one part of the room. “Sister! O Sister!” she exclaimed, with an agonized look of fear; “if I have made a bad Communion I shall be lost. I shall be lost after all!”

“You have not—you will not!” firmly replied Sister Lettice. “Dear child, go in peace! Your sins, which were many, are forgiven. Look at the Five Wounds of Christ now open for you.” She held the crucifix before her eyes, and gently laid her down on the pillow. The battle was won. Nelly grasped the crucifix with all her remaining strength, and drew it towards her lips. Her head drooped. Her hand fell. Doubts, and fears, and all sin, were over now.

. . . . .

Dennis Keegan caught the small-pox too, and had it very badly; but with good nursing at a temporary hospital, hastily got up in a country-suburb, he won through, and came out changed and steadied. Sister Lettice made every effort to get up a subscription for him to go to Western Australia; and, after some time, enough was collected to start him on the voyage. Before he went on board, he came to St. Martha’s one evening radiant with joy. He had made his confession to Mr. Barrow, and had made up his mind to sow such good seed in another quarter of the globe, as should bring him in a solid and fruitful harvest. Sister

Lettice gave him the little crucifix she always wore, and with tears he promised her so to live as to be able to look forward to meeting her at last at the right hand of the Judge. So out of the small-pox plague, by God's help, she had won these two souls.

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## CHAPTER V.



T was far more difficult to win the poor lady in Newman-street. She had never robbed, nor sworn, nor walked the streets at night, nor kept company with thieves and convicts, nor never seen the inside of prison-walls. She was thoroughly respectable, of an old Catholic family, born and brought up in the full enjoyment of religious knowledge and practice. And yet, alas! that practice had dwindled to a still smaller and smaller space, and, finally, even the obligations of duty were not fulfilled. And so grace burned down and went out, and there remained but the heap of cold ashes to tell where the fire had been. Sister Lettice had begun well by winning her confidence. She saw capability, and knowledge, and firmness of character, and certainty of purpose; and being of a strong character herself, she respected such qualities in others. Then she discerned the *goodness* of the Sister; her clear principles, her religious motives, her consistent conduct. She had spent

much of her life at a bad period in France, in a remote province, removed from the religious advantages possessed by the towns, and among cold and ill-instructed families. By degrees, religion had dropped out of her life, and for a time life seemed to go on of itself and without it. When her husband died, his income as an officer on half-pay vanished with him, and her very slender pension was all she had to subsist upon. Family circumstances also obliged her to return to England, where such means as hers went a very little way towards maintenance. Comforts could not be thought of. Fretted and soured by life's little cares, straitened in every point, isolated from the intimates of her life, and shrinking from the approach of strangers to spy into the poverty of the land, she was rapidly sinking out of life, when Mr. Barrow begged Dr. Harley to call and offer his services in her dangerous illness. She was so ill at the moment, that she could neither dislike nor object; and he soon won upon her so far, that to her own surprise she consulted him quite as a friend. His immense practice, and the multitude of business which had grown out of his eminent position in the profession, prevented him from devoting much time to one case; and he was delighted to be able to turn this one over to his valuable friend and coadjutor of St. Martha's.

One day, soon after poor Nelly's death, Sister Lettice went to Newman-street, and found Mrs. Selby sitting up in bed, not in the best of humours, grumbling over the basin of barley-gruel provided for her. Sister Lettice pleasantly greeted her, praised the cleanliness of the rooms, remarked that she looked better, and tasted the obnoxious gruel. It was not hot, nor well mixed, and slightly burnt. "Well," said Mrs. Selby, "is it capital?"

"Not altogether first-rate," replied the Sister, smiling; "it is drinkable, but not inviting. Come, nurse, if you will come with me to the kitchen, we will get up something better than this in a little while." They went down accordingly; for, as the nurse said: "Sister was such a pleasant lady, that when she said 'come,' you had to go whether you would or no." First, she took out of her bag a small packet of Irish oatmeal, and when she had secured a clean saucepan and basin, carefully washed, she put two tablespoonfuls of meal into the basin, and poured over them very carefully two half-pint cups of water. "You see, nurse, the great thing is to do these little things nicely. The things you use must be very clean; then you must pour the water very slowly on the meal, so that every bit of it may be smoothly mixed. When this is not the case, and it is hurried over, lumps of the meal remain hard, which was what spoiled your first attempt. Then oatmeal is more wholesome and soothing than barley, and especially whole oatmeal like this. Now we shall see that when it is put on the fire, being well mixed, it will boil quite smooth." It was put on, and soon boiled, which it was allowed to do for about five minutes. A little lemon was squeezed in, sugar added, and on tasting it, the nurse acknowledged it was quite another thing, and as good as gruel could be. Mrs. Selby was happily of the same mind.

During Dr. Harley's visit, which happened that day, Sister Lettice took the opportunity of instructing the cook how to make beef-tea. The girl was careless and untidy, but had a good will; and having now given into the spirit of the house, to try and help as far as she could, she was proud for the lady to show her how to make what "the sick lodger" wanted. First, Sister Lettice made

her cut out every bit of fat from the pound of meat she had ordered, mince it finely, and lay it on a pint of cold water in a soup-plate. This, covered with another soup-plate, she left to simmer for an hour, charging the cook not to move it, but to let it simmer as slowly as possible. As the end of the hour, during which she performed many little offices for Mrs. Selby's comfort, she went down and uncovered the beef, strained it, and laid it by. As soon as it was cold, she skimmed off the fat, and added a little salt and all-spice. To-day, Dr. Harley had allowed beef-tea to be given. The Sister told the cook to prepare some mutton-tea in the same manner, taking even greater care to remove the fat. Mutton is less heating, she said, for sick persons than beef.

When the beef-tea had been drunk, and Mrs. Selby had lain down, Sister Lettice said to her:

“ Shall I read to you a little?”

She looked surprised, and in her surprise, replied:

“ If you like.”

The Sister took out her invariable companion—her New Testament—and read the eleventh chapter of St. John's Gospel, and afterwards the Passion of our Lord, by St. Luke. She had well calculated in choosing what could not possibly allow of weariness or distaste. Mrs. Selby's attention was fastened to every word. It has already been said that Sister Lettice had a voice which charmed the ear, even when there was not the mind to discern the qualities it represented. In reading of the life and words of our Lord, she so realized His presence and power, so represented to herself the scenes, that unconsciously she conveyed to others the same impression. She seemed to linger round the cross, to

journey with that desolate group to the new sepulchre. The door seemed to shut upon her as well as upon them, and to shut out from her, too, the only hope, the only love, of which life is worthy.

And then she closed the book, and by slow and gentle degrees, in a sentence, by a few words, gentle and clear, she returned to the key-note of what had been read. As if speaking to herself, as if led by some inward, loving, irresistible impulse, she repeated, in various ways, the one idea to be retained: “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” *The Master.* He is the Master, yet He commands nothing; He has obtained nothing; He has never been obeyed; He has waited like a servant of servants upon our pleasure; . . . He has sat at the gate, knocking in the night watches, and never has the gate been opened to let Him in. . . . *The Master.* . . . Is this, indeed, our Master, sitting by the wayside, watching for our return? . . . He is wearied out with watching for us, but we have never thought of Him. . . . He went on following us about, . . . providing us with necessaries, . . . keeping us in health, . . . shielding us from harm; . . . but we paid no heed to Him. . . . He not only waits for us, weary and worn, but He *comes*. “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” Oh! when shall we rise up and haste and fly to answer that call? . . . when shall we, indeed, only *begin* to serve Him, and give Him the hearts that are His own? . . . When shall we take up His sweet yoke, . . . giving Him our own heavy burthens to bear, . . . and choose Him for our Lord and our Master for ever? . . .

The fire flickered and burned brightly in the grate, and the ticking of the little clock seemed to grow louder, so deep a hush fell on the room. Mrs. Selby’s eyes were

shaded by her hand ; she seemed to sleep. Sister Lettice prayed most fervently for her, and then began quietly to say the rosary of the Sorrows. That mother of mercy, the refuge of the weak and sick of soul, was her unfailing help in time of need. . . . Never has the sorrowful heart of Mary been invoked in vain.

“ Sister,” at length said a husky, scarcely audible voice—“ Sister, . . . say a prayer with me. Don’t think me thankless. . . . I am stupid and bad, but not that.”

“ Oh, hush !” said Sister Lettice, getting up and leaning towards her with unspeakable tenderness. “ Let us both only think how we can serve God better for the rest of our lives !” She fell on her knees and said the *Miserere*, and one or two other psalms, and a prayer or two full of sorrow for sin and graces neglected ; then the “ Hail, holy Queen,” repeating several times, “ Show unto us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus !” Then she got up and said : “ I must leave you now, but I will come this evening and see if you want anything. Perhaps you would like to keep this.” She laid her little well-worn Testament on the bed. As she stooped to kiss the sick lady’s forehead, she was glad to hear the earnest “ Just what I wanted ; God bless you !”

Sister Lettice went home, more tired out than she had ever been ; but the sweet music in her heart banished all sense of the fatigue. Again and again the words rose up in her mind and to her lips : “ Lord, thou hast been our Refuge from generation to generation. . . . Mother of sorrows, never hast thou been invoked in vain ! Speak a good word for this soul also, and bring it to the haven of rest where it would be !”

Not long after this, Sister Lettice rang one evening,

rather late, at the priest's door, and found Mr. Barrow in his room.

"Father, I want you to go and see some one to-morrow morning without fail."

"Without fail? *Le roi le veut!* I think, to look at you, it cannot be a very bad case."

"Guess who it is."

The sagacious, genial eye of the parish priest investigated her face.

"Is it Mrs. Selby?"

"Thank God, it is that very same!"

"Thank God!" earnestly repeated the good man. "Sister," he added, taking out a serious pinch of snuff—"Sister, you are the best fishwoman in all St. Giles'!"

"Those who went with St. Peter caught a good draught," replied she, smiling.

"Yes, yes," said the priest, nodding his head. "St. Peter's net is not worn out yet. Do you know, Sister, this is the best news I have heard for a long time, and yet I am not bankrupt in good news either. Be sure you tell Dr. Harley; and will you ask them all at St. Martha's to say one *Magnificat* in thanksgiving?"

"I will indeed, Father. Good night."

The next morning, for the first time for nineteen years, Mrs. Selby spoke to a priest about her soul. It was some days, of course, before so long a confession could be finished, and before she could prepare for what was to her a first Communion renewed. And she did prepare with all her heart; and with all her heart resolved to amend her life, and serve God well for the rest of her life. She kept her word. She recovered

entirely from her severe illness, began to practise visiting and relieving the poor, under Sister Lettice's directions, went to study in the neighbouring hospital, and finally became an inmate of St. Martha's Home, where she laboured for several years as a useful and efficient nurse.

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## C H A P T E R V I.



FEW words should, perhaps, now be said about St. Martha's Home. It was an unpretending institution, working with very simple machinery, and yet producing useful and extensive results. It began with *one member*, namely, Sister Lettice herself, who had been studying nursing the sick under Dr. Harley's direction, in one of the neighbouring hospitals. Finding that she had coolness and self-possession, and a firmness of purpose which compensated for a fine and sensitive organization, he tested her powers with cases of accidents, broken limbs, and operations, till she became familiarized with the more shocking forms of disease and bodily pain. He next tried her temper and patience, and was satisfied that she could bear with the mistakes and failures of others, and persist in her own course of duty in spite of difficulties. He then consulted Mr. Barrow, the parish priest; and, after the matter had been fully turned over, so as to ventilate its difficulties, a committee of a few practical men was formed, and a house taken, in which ladies, willing to

give themselves to the work of nursing the sick poor, might live. It was determined, at first, to begin carefully, and to seek out a few who had some little income of their own; which, as they lived rent-free, would be sufficient for their support. Two ladies, one a widow, and one unmarried, immediately offered themselves, and the work was begun. A few simple rules were drawn up, as to the hours of the day, meals in common, religious exercises, and limits of work; and by Mr. Barrow's wish, Miss Turvile, or Sister Lettice, was to be considered the mistress of the house, and the person responsible for its order and arrangements.

After a little while, when the more influential members of the committee saw the field of work that opened, and the great good to be obtained by very simple co-operation for one end, one or two ladies were induced to join the Guild, whose means were sufficiently ample to allow of building considerably, and of receiving several valuable members without incomes, who were soon trained to remarkable efficiency. The plan thus grew into a more organized and developed shape. Associates, or outdoor members, were added on, who, without being free from home ties, could still dispose of certain hours of the day, or portions of the week; and who regularly met at stated times, to discuss what had been, or was to be done, and to receive instructions suited to their labours. Every month, the committee met at the Home, with Mr. Barrow, Dr. Harley, and one or two other medical men of eminence. They examined the accounts and receipts, looked over the register, carefully kept, of relieved cases and visits, and another register, in which whatever spiritual results had been gained were noted. The Warden and several of the

Sisters were on the committee, and answered whatever questions were asked, or suggestions made. Mr. Barrow proved an excellent President, keeping every one on the right line, and up to the work in hand; and both he and Dr. Harley were delighted and surprised at the success of their experiment, and the amount of good effected. Wishing to avoid anything like assumption or affectation, with admirable good sense, they induced the Sisters to wear a plain black dress, with ordinary cloaks, and black straw bonnets, such as unpretending people wear, but all alike. This uniformity, with the little silver crucifix round the neck, marked them as an associated body, while it attracted no attention; and it was only by its valuable labours and solid results, that, by little and little, St. Martha's Home became known as a blessing to some of the most difficult and crowded parishes in London.

The grain of mustard seed grew, and its branches filled the air, and gave to many scattered units a common home, and labour which was worthy of life.

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#### A P P E N D I X.

It is impossible to repeat too often or in too strong words the mischief and evils produced by dirt. Dirt and dust stop all the pores or little openings in the skin, prevent the heat and impurities of the body from escaping; or produce boils, sores, swellings, and all kinds of skin disease. These are the consequences of *unwashed flesh*. If the *clothes* are not washed, all the impurities that have managed to escape through the skin,

and all those contracted from outside influences, *pass again into the body*, and produce fresh disease. Going to hospitals and dispensaries, and swallowing bottles of physic, are useless ceremonies, if the bodies and clothes of those who use them are not kept clean.

“ It takes up too much time.”

It takes up a great deal of time to be ill, and to wait in the dispensary for the remedies.

Why are the rooms of the London poor so shocking in their dirt and bad smells? *Because they are not washed*, or if they are washed, it is with dirty and bad-smelling cloths. Soap, people say, is dear. If it is, *and it is certainly cheaper than physic*, soda is cheap, and more cleansing too. No one should ever be without soda to wash their room. After the room is washed, the cloth should be rinsed in soda and water, and very well dried. Whenever it is possible, the window ought to be opened many times during the day, if only for five minutes, to change the air.

In cases of sickness, some chloride of lime should be put into a saucer, or plate, or old jug, with some water, and kept in the room. When a drain smells, or anything in the house which washing cannot remove, prevents the air from being wholesome, chloride of lime will lessen the evil.

Chloride of lime and soda well used in a house, will keep it free from vermin. *Vermin can never live where there is constant cleanliness, dusting, and washing.*

Air is absolutely necessary for health. If the windows or the door cannot be kept partly open, a small round hole should be bored at the top of the door, and another in the upper window-frame, sloping a little downwards to the outside. These holes should be about half an inch across. By this means fresh air is brought in for the lungs to breathe.

Children's health is very much ruined by eating cheap sweeties. Nothing need be said here about the waste of money, as this will be mentioned in another place. But the stomach cannot act, the digestive matter is interfered with, and all the

organs weakened, by the use of sweet food. The sooner this foolish and wasteful habit is left off the better. The best remedy is to get from a chemist a pennyworth of rhubarb-root (Turkey rhubarb), and put it into a teacupful of clean cold water. Cover it with a saucer, and leave it for three or four hours. Give the child the water in which the rhubarb has been steeped. The same piece of rhubarb will last for a week. If the child is delicate, and its stomach very weak, put a few drops of peppermint into the mixture. This is less griping and troublesome than powdered rhubarb.

Another remedy is carbonate of magnesia. An ounce, which can be bought for threepence, will keep in a bottle for a long time. Half a teaspoonful, given in warm milk before breakfast, is excellent for young children. The bottle must be well corked, and a piece of paper tied over it. A teaspoonful of bruised caraway-seeds in a bottle of hot water, is very useful to add to the magnesia.

Castor-oil is nearly always the quickest and safest remedy to use without a doctor's order. Half a teaspoonful can be given to a baby, and another half teaspoonful for every year of age, up to three teaspoonfuls, which is enough for a child of ten or twelve years old. It can be given in a cup of hot coffee, or boiling milk, and in these ways will scarcely be tasted.

#### *To put on Leeches.*

Choose always those which seem quick and lively, and before they are put on, take them out of the jar, and let them crawl on a clean cloth or paper, covered with a glass. The glass must have a small wedge of paper put under it, so as to lift it the least in one place to give them air. Carefully wash the part where the leeches are to be put on, as they have a great dislike to dirt, and afterwards rub over the skin a little cream (or milk) and sugar. This is in case the leeches are slow to bite, as they often are when the inflammation is bad. Keep a wine-glass loosely over each, till it has well bitten.

they are full, they will generally drop off of themselves. If enough of blood has been taken, and the patient gets very faint, drop a few grains of salt on the head of the leech to be loosened. Many persons put on immediately a large bread-and-water poultice; but, in this, judgment must be used, as it sometimes makes the bites very sore. In general, soft rag is enough, which must be carefully changed if there is a free bleeding.

*To Draw a Boil or Carbuncle.*

Buy a couple of small wooden bowls, and boil them in a saucepanful of water. Get a thick piece of baize, felt, or flannel round, and cut out the inside of it the size of the boil. Put the boiling bowl over it, letting the edge rest on the ring of baize or flannel, or it will make a scald. The heat of the wood will draw the boil better than a poultice. Keep one bowl boiling to relieve the other.\*

*For Weak Eyes and Eyelids.*

Take a handful of camomile flowers, and put them in a teapot, pouring over them boiling milk. Let the milk cool, and wash the eyes several times a day. It is an excellent remedy.

*Arrowroot for Drink.*

Mix a teaspoonful of arrowroot very smooth with a little cold water. Boil some water thoroughly, and pour it over it, stirring it all the time one way; squeeze into it the juice of half a lemon, and add sugar; strain it off into a jug, and let it stand to get cool.

To make a cup of more nourishing arrowroot, mix two teaspoonfuls with milk instead of water, and pour over it boiling milk, stirring exactly as before.

\* In some cases, instead of opening the carbuncle, it is thought better to cover it with sticking-plaster.

*Lemonade.*

Take the third part of the peel of a lemon, very thinly peeled, with two good tablespoonfuls of coarse brown sugar; cut the lemon longways in two, and squeeze the piece into the basin, stirring the whole mixture till it becomes a syrup. Pour a pint and a-half of boiling water over it, and stir it well.

*Barley Water.*

Two ounces of pearl barley should be boiled in half-a-pint of water, for five minutes. That water being thrown away, two quarts should be added, and boiled till the water is reduced to one quart, or the half. It should be strained through coarse muslin, and flavoured with lemon and sugar.

*Tamarind Drink.*

Half-a-pint of tamarinds in a quart of water, poured over them boiling, and standing for an hour, makes an excellent cooling and cleansing drink in fevers, or any severe disease. It can be strained or not.

*Sago Jelly.*

Four tablespoonfuls of sago in a quart of water; should simmer (not boil) till the sago is quite dissolved. A little lemon or orange, and, if it can be had, a little wine, will make it very good. It is best when cold. If the sago is first soaked, it dissolves more quickly.

*A Nourishing Cream for the Weak.*

One pound of veal, mutton, or beef, cut into small pieces, and put into a saucepan with a couple of ounces of pearl barley; should be covered with three pints of water. It ought to simmer on the hob for eight or ten hours, and then be rasped through a fine sieve. If it has sufficiently

simmered, it will not be thicker than cream. There must be no fat in the meat. Tapioca or sago may be used instead of barley.

*Apple Drink.*

Cut slices of apple and toast them; put them into a jug with a thick square of toasted bread; pour over them a quart of boiled water. It will be ready in two hours. The apple may be used without the bread, and it may also be used without being toasted. *The water used for this and all drinks for the sick ought to be first boiled.*

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Sixty drops make a teaspoonful.

Two teaspoonfuls make a dessertspoonful.

Four teaspoonfuls make a tablespoonful.

One teaspoonful is a drachm.

A dessertspoonful is two drachms.

A tablespoonful is half-an-ounce.

A common drinking mug is half-a-pint.

Two pints make a quart.



## ST. JOSEPH'S NIGHT.

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HERE were two doors to St. Martha's Home. One was in the square, and the other was round the corner in the street. This last had an iron gate, which led through a narrow court to the house. The door opened into a wide passage, off which were two or three little rooms, used for seeing poor people who called for a Sister, or convalescents that came for medicine, lotions, or rags, as they often did for some time after they had been ill. The last of these side-rooms was fitted up as a dispensary, which was full of good medicines in common use, a quantity of useful herbs, a large pestle and mortar, a stewing-stove, a watersink, with hot and cold taps, and everything that could be reasonably required. At the end of the wide passage was a large room, fitted up with seats in a semicircle, with flat desks in front of them, with ample room between the desks and seats. This semicircle of seats and desks rose up gradually higher towards the back, so that, even when it was crowded, every one could see and hear. Opposite to the semicircle was a platform and a high desk and chair, with drawers at the sides of the desk, an ink-stand, and candles with shades. This room was convenient for all sorts of things. Mr. Barrow used it to give instruction to the inmates; Dr. Harley used it as a lecture-room to explain to them

their duties as sick-nurses ; the Warden used it as a class-room or instruction-room, just as it was needed ; and, on one night in the week, it served as a meeting-room for a number of poor married women, who were associated together under the title of the Little Guild of St. Joseph, and met there once a week to make clothing, and to receive a familiar instruction on their household duties. This Monday-meeting they always called " St. Joseph's Night."

There was not one among them who did not love and value St. Joseph's Night. Before the clock struck seven, the street-door was surrounded by a little knot of women, quiet and orderly, more tidy or respectable-looking than the ordinary passers-by, who were waiting to get the first chance of a front seat in the semi-circle—as well as the mark which each received for being there when the *Angelus* was said. Exactly as the large clock in the entry struck, the door flew open, and one of the elder girls, or Home-maids, stood there to let the women in. From seven o'clock till nine on Mondays, she sat in the little side-room nearest the door, and let in each one who came. So there was no waiting, or disorder, or room for discontent. As it was not like a school or class, and some of the poor women were obliged to wait later than others to give their husbands their tea, or to attend to an ailing child, or to put away their own washing, &c., every allowance was made for them. Each one who came in made her little curtsey, said " good evening," and passed to a place in the semi-circle. Of course the early comers had the front seats, and those who were last were farthest from the Sister's desk and from the fire. So they all tried their best to come in time.

As soon as the first batch were seated and the work laid on the desks, the Sister touched a little handbell on her desk, and they all knelt down and said the *Angelus*. Then they began to work and to talk quietly; and the Sister went round and spoke to each, and asked how they were getting on, and saw whether they had anything particular to say. Probably, one of the members then asked leave to propose a new one, and the name and address were taken down on a slate. New members were proposed to the whole meeting the first Monday of every month, when Mr. Clifford, the second priest of the parish, always attended. Mr. Clifford was the chaplain of the Little Guild.

Then the Sister went to her high desk and read a short account from one of the Catholic papers, or an interesting passage from a new book, choosing something about Rome, the Holy Father, or what was being done or suffered in the cause of religion in other countries or at home. Some of the women would then ask a question or make a remark, and the Sister would give such explanations as were suitable to the subject. By this time the chief body of the Guild-women were gathered, and the serious business began.

On this particular night, Sister Elizabeth, who was at present director of the Little Guild, laid on her desk several large sheets of paper, with drawings or pictures on them, and told the Guild-women she was going to begin a set of short lectures on the Food most fit and proper for nourishing the Body and keeping it in Health. This is pretty nearly what was said:—

*Sister Elizabeth*—“ You will think it, very likely, a dull thing to talk about, my dear friends, and

some of you may despise it, and think it of no consequence, so long as you attend to your religious duties, what kind of food you eat, and what sort of meals you prepare for your husbands and children. But I can tell you again, as I have told you many times before, and shall have to tell you many more, that it is part of your conscientious duty as Christian women to know what is the best food to provide, what price you ought to give for it, and how to cook and save it to the best advantage. You all know that when Almighty God formed man out of the red mud, or slime, of the newly-created or freshly-organized earth, He made him *in His own Image*. We do not exactly know how far this expression is intended to go, because none of the Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity had a body or outward shape; but we know that not one word of the Scriptures was written down without the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and here in the Bible I read, three times repeated: 'Let us make man to Our Own Image and Likeness;' 'And God created man to His Own Image —to the Image of God He created him;\*' and we may be sure that this Form or Image was an idea carefully prepared from all eternity for this end. This ought to make us value and reverence our bodies, even if there were no other reasons.

" But when we look a little more into the matter, we find fresh reasons at every step for admiring the wonders of our bodies. The Psalms say: 'We are fearfully and wonderfully made;' and this is true indeed. A man's body is not very large; it does not

\* Gen. i. 26, 27.

take up a great deal of room; yet it can do a great deal of work: so much, that, as a mere machine, it is reckoned as 445 times more powerful than the steam-engine, supposing the food for the man and the coal for the engine to be the same. For food is the coal for our engine, so it is necessary to choose the best we can. Besides giving us strength to work, food does several other things. It repairs the wear and tear of life, and it warms us, or we should die. *There is as much heat made in our bodies in one day, as would boil eighty pints of water.*"

Sister Elizabeth then pinned a large sheet on the black-board beside the desk, and said: "Now, Mrs. Sullivan, will you read that?" Mrs. Sullivan read:

"Food gives strength to work;  
"Food gives warmth;  
"Food repairs the wear and tear of life."  
"I shall never forget that, Sister."

*Sister Elizabeth*—"You understand, then, I am sure, how necessary it is to choose the right kind of food. If you were to fill a steam-engine with ballast-shingle, or to eat charcoal for your own dinner, you would get no work done by either. You must choose food which can be consumed by the body, and turned into flesh, bone, and blood; or rather, the great objects are to get *flesh* and *warmth*, for then the body will be best nourished, and best able to work. Food generally contains gluten, starch, sugar, and gum, with a good proportion of water, and some mineral which is like ashes. Milk, for instance, which is the first food of all young creatures, contains the *curd*, which is the flesh-substance, or gluten; *butter*, which is the fat or starch; *whey*, which is the water; and if the whey were dried

in the sun or air, there would remain a little heap of mineral, or ashes."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Toole, a young married woman; "I have always had ashes put on my head on every Ash-Wednesday since I can remember, but I never knew we eat them in our food. What can be the use of that, Sister?"

"I do not promise to make you understand the *reasons* of everything I tell you," replied Sister Elizabeth, smiling; "but you forget that besides the flesh, and fat, and water in our bodies, there is the *frame* upon which it hangs. Our bones are made of mineral substance, lime, and other things; and they require fresh mineral substance to keep them in repair, just as we break up fresh stones to mend our roads. Now, besides milk, there is another food which we all use, and could not do without, in some shape or other. This is bread, which you know is often called the staff of life; and I like the name, because it puts us in mind of the Living Bread, without which we are sure to die: the Blessed Eucharist, which is our support and strength in life and death. Bread has in it a sticky paste, which is gluten, or flesh-substance, a powder which is starch or fat, water, and ashes. Now, I should like to hear any of our friends, who will be so kind, tell us exactly what happens in making bread. Who is a good hand at it, and used to the work?"

Several voices spoke at once, and heads were turned towards one quarter: "Mrs. Delaney!" "Mrs. Delaney knows!" "Mrs. Delaney has baked a power of bread in her time!" Mrs. Delaney, a clean, quiet-looking old woman, with a very white-frilled cap inside her bonnet, said modestly: "Yes, Sister, I have, as they say, baked

a power of bread in former days. We had a fine farm in Ireland, near Limerick, and I used to bake every week twice, and the bread was admired far and near."

"Thank you, Mrs. Delaney," replied Sister Elizabeth; "then will you be so good as to transport us all to Limerick County—where I am sure we should all enjoy going very much—and tell us exactly what happened on baking days. Will you take only about seven pounds of flour first, if you please, and give us the quantities as exactly as you can?"

"Certainly, Sister. I should take my seven pounds of flour—is it to be wheat flour, Sister; and fine or coarse?" asked Mrs. Delaney, interrupting herself.

"Very true; I am glad you remembered. It is to be fine wheat flour, if you please, to make good white bread."

"Then I should take the flour, Sister, and put it in a clean pan, and make a hollow in the middle with my hand. I should mix a pint of warmish water and half a quarter of a pint of barm or yeast, and pour it into the hollow. Then I should stir it up with a good big wooden spoon, or a stick. I used to keep a thick chestnut stick, as white as milk, for stirring up my bread. When it was stirred, it was like thick paste."

"Yes," said Sister Elizabeth; "you will all understand that the sticky paste is the gluten or flesh-substance of the flour, and it contains the starch or fat hidden in it."

"This paste should stand aside in a warm place, for an hour and a-quarter, to let the dough rise," continued Mrs. Delaney; "and then I should put in a couple of

teaspoonfuls of salt, and knead it as well as ever I could, with as much warm water as I thought the dough wanted to make it mix. It must not be kneaded hard, but lightly, and over and over again. That makes the yeast get into every bit of the flour, and you must not mind having a good arm-ache. Then I should cover it up, and stand the dough aside again for another hour and a-half, to let it rise more thoroughly."

"Yes," said Sister Elizabeth; "and then it would become more and more spongy and light, and would be filled with bubbles. This is what I particularly wanted to explain to you. The yeast, the moisture, and the warmth, made the starch turn into sugar and gum; and while this was doing, the fixed air or gas, hidden in the starch, burst out, and made those little bubbles. There is no need to tell you the hard names of the air and other substances, but you can quite understand what happens when bread is made. When this seven pounds of flour is cut into three loaves, and baked for one hour and forty minutes, the bread will be full of good nourishment. It will have the flesh-substance, to give strength; the gum and sugar, supplying the place of the starch, will give the heat-substance; and dry as it may seem, there will be the water absorbed by the dough: so that bread is food and drink too."

"Please, Sister," said Mrs. Delaney, "I met lately with a little book, given to a neighbour of mine by what she called one of their 'Bible-women,' and in it I read that brown bread is more nourishing and better than white. Is that true?"

"No," replied Sister Elizabeth; "I believe it is not true. I know it has been said and repeated again and

again, but I think it began with a mistake. A great German chemist\* thought that the outer husk of the wheat was more nourishing, that is, made more flesh, than fine flour—and according to strictly chemical principles, perhaps it does; but practically it is found to pass from the body more quickly, so that it does not remain long enough to make flesh or muscle. I believe it is now generally understood, from plain every-day experience, that the finest and whitest flour is the most nourishing. Brown bread is a good and wholesome medicine, and it is useful to exchange sometimes with white. Oatmeal is very nourishing, and should be used from time to time; but it is too rich, or full of gluten, for many people, and then it brings out eruptions on the skin. Indian meal is very rich in nourishing matter, so much so, that it is the cheapest of all the kinds of oatmeal you can buy, calculating the nourishment and price equally for all, except split peas, which have the largest quantities of the nourishing or glutinous matter.† I have put them down in a scale, so that you can remember more easily how they come. Mrs. Molloy, will you be so good as to read out the list?" Mrs. Molloy read from the sheet just pinned up:—

"Peas (split, not taking into account the indigestible husks).

"Indian Corn, or Maize.

"Bread.

\* Liebig.

† On the same chemical principles, beans are found to contain, perhaps, the most nourishing matter of all. But chemical matter is one thing, and practically digestible and palatable matter another; and every day proves the truth of Guizot's grand maxim: "Nothing falsifies logic so much as history."

“ Fine Flour.

“ Oatmeal.

“ Rice.

“ Barley.”

“ You all know, of course, that peas and Indian corn cannot be baked into bread,” said Sister Elizabeth; “ therefore, they are out of the question as a staple article of food. I should then take bread as No. 1, fine flour as No. 2, in usefulness. Indian meal and rice, well boiled, with a little good mutton suet, make excellent puddings for a large family; and it is a great pity you do not all study useful cookery of this sort more. You give your husbands a miserable dinner of tea and bread and butter, with a wasteful and extravagant addition of fried bacon—nearly the dearest of all food—when you might get him every day a good nourishing soup or satisfying pudding. A few pence will buy a good piece of mutton suet or dripping, which are both a great deal cheaper, and a very great deal more nourishing, than the best butter. But I will give you by-and-bye some capital receipts for these things.

“ Together with milk and bread, the next kind of food we may call of universal use is meat. The most nourishing kind of meat is beef, the next mutton, then pork and bacon; so that it always answers better to get a bit of coarse beef, or beef-trimmings, than to buy bacon. The least wasteful way of dressing meat is to boil it, as meat loses an ounce and a-half more in roasting, and an ounce more in baking, than in boiling. Before you begin to boil it, you should dip it into boiling water, to shut up all the juice of the meat inside. When you want to let *out* all the juice, as in making beef-tea or broth, you must put it into cold water, and let it

simmer gently. In the same way, if you want to roast your bit of meat, *put it down before a fierce fire for a little while*, to harden the outside; then move it further away to cook it gradually. If you do not do this, the gravy all runs out."

"Please, Sister," says Mrs. Molloy, "I know a family that thrives very well, where the mother buys now and then an ox-cheek, and boils it. She gives the meat to her husband, who works very hard in a gas-factory, and she and the children have the soup."

"I know that is a capital plan," said Sister Elizabeth. "If you do not mind, will you take the trouble to tell us how she makes the soup?"

"She first rubs the cheek with a little salt and pepper, Sister, and puts it into a good-sized saucepan, with water according to the size of the cheek; sometimes a quart, sometimes two quarts, and sometimes, she says, she has put as much as four quarts of water to a large cheek. If it is the largest size, she keeps it simmering on the hob three hours; if not, one will do. Then she skims off the fat, which is first-rate for puddings. She puts in an onion, and may be a little rice, or barley, or peas, or may be only stale bread, and a little parsley or carrot. The meat is as tender as a sweet-bread, and she has a quart or two, at least, of nice thick soup."

"That is a most excellent plan," said Sister Elizabeth; "and how much better for her good man and her children, than a mess of washy tea and bread and butter, which you may eat for ever, and not feel satisfied. You might also get two pennyworth or three pennyworth of beef-bones, and break them small; boil them for three hours, in eight quarts of water, with at

least three tablespoonfuls of salt, and a few herbs; skim off the fat, and take out the bones. Then put the fat into a pan, with a couple of onions, a few carrots and turnips, and a little coarse brown sugar. Stir them all together for a-quarter of an hour, adding half a pound of oatmeal. Then pour over this the bone-broth, and, if you like, add a pound of rice, or a little barley, or any stale crusts you have. This will make a delicious bowl of nourishing soup, much cheaper, and five times more satisfying, than all the bread and butter you could eat."

"Thank you, Sister," said Mrs. Delaney; "I shall not forget that I am sure. It is very true, it is foolish to live, as most of us do, on slops of tea and such like. I am sure it is partly laziness; but, besides that, many of us have not been taught cheap cooking, and have never seen it. I shall tell my son's wife what you say, and help her to make up one or two of your receipts. Her husband is very thin with his work, and the children are as white and delicate as can be; yet she is giving them bread and butter all the day long, and his wages can scarce keep them."

"No wages can stand that perpetual drain of bread and butter, given in such a wasteful manner," replied the Sister. "It makes my heart ache to go into so many houses, and find the children sucking crusts of greasy bread at all hours in the day. Why, it would ruin the health of the strongest man to have his digestion fidgetted and worked without rest in that way. You ought to give your children regular meals, and as good food as you can get; but never feed them out of mealtimes. This is one reason why rich peoples' children look so much healthier than poor ones. They

eat at mealtimes, but not at other hours in the day. I will now tell you one more cheap dish, which makes a capital Sunday dinner, because it will cook itself while you go to Mass. Get a piece of about two pounds of neck of mutton, and lay it in a pan with six or eight good potatoes, three or four sliced onions, half a teaspoonful of pepper, three teaspoonfuls of salt, and enough water quite to cover the whole. Set the pan in a slow oven for two hours, or get it baked at the baker's. It will come out a famous Sunday dinner. Potatoes are very often spoiled for want of good cooking. New ones ought to be put into nearly boiling water, old ones into cold. They should always be boiled *in their skins*, and a little salt put in the water. *The water ought always to be poured away*, and the potatoes left standing near the fire, covered over with a cloth. If the potatoes are watery, a little bit of lime should be put into the water."

"Please, Sister, is there as much nourishment in other vegetables as there is in the potato?" asked a young married woman.

"There are vegetables which are not so rich in starch or fat, but have a greater quantity of flesh-substance," replied the Sister; "and I am glad you have asked me the question, as it is absolutely necessary for health to eat a good portion of vegetable food. The most nourishing of these green vegetables is cabbage; and I wish we could oftener see among our people here what they are so fond of in Ireland, that is, cabbage and potatoes boiled together, with a little bacon or pork fat, or suet or dripping, with salt and pepper. You nearly all know how good colcannon is; and why you do not eat it here, I cannot think."

The elder women's faces brightened at the very word colcannon, and they laughed and smiled at one another. Mrs. Delaney said—"I think you are right, Sister; we all get foolish-like when we come to England, and want to leave off all our own Irish ways. One thing is, that if we were to get colcannon and buttermilk, and so on, here, the neighbours would be looking and laughing at us."

"Well, I know," said Sister Elizabeth; "and for that very reason, my dear friends, I think you are the strangest people that I ever knew. *Why do you mind being laughed at?* A Scotchman rather enjoys it. An American would say—'Laugh on, but I shall laugh the last.' A Frenchman would laugh again, and tell his neighbour he was an ignorant man. Why do not you laugh back, and do the same, and say—'Ah! you do not know what is good!' No quantity of laughing that I can imagine would take the taste out of your colcannon, or the nourishment out of your buttermilk. Next to cabbage come carrots, turnips, and onions, all of which are excellent as food.

"I believe you are all fond of herrings and haddock, and you are wise in choosing these fish, for they have a good deal of food and oil in them. *Fresh* herrings have a much larger quantity of both than dry herrings, so they are more nourishing, and therefore cheaper, as you get a great deal more for your money. But if you could get it, buttermilk would give you more nourishment for your money than most things you can buy. It is very full both of food or flesh-substance, and of oil or fat; and this is the reason why the Irish can do such a quantity of work, and look so fresh and healthy. It was supposed for a long time to be owing to the potato, but it is now ascertained, without a doubt, to be

caused by the use of buttermilk. In this country, people are still so ignorant of the value of buttermilk, or so prejudiced against it, that they usually give it to the pigs, and this deprives our poor neighbours of a most valuable and wholesome food. Wherever it is to be had, whey would be a great deal better worth drinking than water, or weak tea. I have not said anything about cheese, because you are not in the habit of eating it here, as they are in the country, and I believe most of our Irish friends do not like cheese at all. When I first went to Ireland, I was surprised to find that in a country so rich in grass, no cheese was made; but I now believe it is not so cheap or good a diet as we are apt to suppose, because a good deal of it does not digest, and therefore it does not add to the flesh and muscle of the body. I may as well tell you, that if you want to buy the most nourishing cheese, you should get a skim-milk cheese in preference to one made with fresh milk, as the skim-milk kind has the greatest quantity of flesh-substance in it.

“ And now I have nearly finished my list of different kinds of food. But before I leave off, I have something to say about *what you drink*. You know we said that the body contained a good deal of water, and that proper food also contains water, besides the flesh-substance, and starch, and ashes or mineral. If it did not, the body would wither and dry up, and the blood-vessels would shrink. But although nearly all food, or nearly all, contains water, that is not enough for the body’s waste. If you were to look at a piece of skin through a strong microscope, you would find it full of irregular holes, through which the moisture of the body is continually oozing out. It is necessary, therefore, to put more in.

If we all lived in a natural state, perhaps we should never want to drink anything but water; but we live in an artificial state, of close rooms, heat of fire and gas, and clothed, and we feel to want something that shall rouse us up, or *stimulate* us after our work. I will not say anything now about strong stimulants, such as spirits, wine, and beer, because I shall have something to tell you about them by-and-bye; but there are wholesome stimulants which you all use. Tea, coffee, and cocoa are all useful in many ways; and as you all drink at least one of them, I want you to be able to judge for yourselves which is the best. It is curious to think how we all use the leaves of a shrub growing in a country thousands of miles away, which we none of us, probably, shall ever see. These tea-shrubs cover nearly as much ground altogether as the whole of Wales. Fancy three millions and a-half of acres of these tea gardens! Indeed we *cannot* imagine so much at once, or the quantity produced. Sixty millions of pounds of tea, thirty-five millions of pounds of coffee, and four millions of pounds of cocoa are drunk every year in Great Britain. When the tea-trees have come out into leaf, men and women go out and strip them bare. These leaves are dried carefully by the sun and by charcoal, and divided into green and black teas. The leaves quickly dried make green tea, and the leaves more slowly dried make black tea. Black tea is more wholesome and generally useful than green. It seems strange that every one, whether in hot countries, like China and India, or in cold countries, like Russia and England, likes tea, and seems to find some good in it above the usual refreshment of a drink. Many people, even learned chemists and doctors, thought for a long time that tea *was* only a stimulant, and that there was no nourishment

or support in it. But for some years experiments have proved that all tea, whether grown in China, or India, or Ceylon, gives out from its vapour a white powder, which has a very great sustaining power. If a strong man has half a pound of bread taken from him daily, and three grains of white tea-powder given him instead, he will not miss the bread. This shows that it is not a delusion which causes so many people to say they would rather go without any meal than their tea."

"Well now!" exclaimed an old Mrs. Lynch, "it is really too bad to go on so about old women and their slops of tea, as my son does. He is always preaching against this wish-washy tea, and goes on ever so about washerwomen who must needs have their tea three times a day! And now I shall come down upon him, and tell him he is all in the wrong."

"He is certainly wrong in thinking tea of no use," replied the Sister, smiling; "but the chief use of it is not so much for food as for repairing the waste of the nerves and brain, which you know makes our bodies able to work. It also cheers us up, and makes us fresh again, when we are very tired."

"Well, indeed, that is true!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynch, again. "Why, when I've been washing and clearing up, and seem all in one piece with being so stiff, and then take a cup of hot tea, it makes me as lively as a cricket again directly!"

The women laughed, and Sister Elizabeth said: "Yes, but you must take care of one thing—*you must not take too much of it*. I told you, if a man takes *three* grains of tea-powder, he is very much the better for it; but if he takes *ten* grains, he will find the blood flowing too fast through his head, he will tremble all over, and be

wakeful at night. The fact is, he has given his nerves and brain too much food, and they are unnaturally excited. The Chinese, in their curious way of making parables out of everything, have made one about this. They say that a long time ago there lived a Chinese philosopher, or wise man, who wanted to watch and pray a great deal, but he was always going to sleep. He was so angry at not being able to keep his eyes open that he cut off his eyelids. But when he threw his two eyelids on the ground, they took root, and grew up to be tea-shrubs, which had leaves the shape of eyelids, with hairs like eyelashes all round them. Whenever sleepy people make a drink of these leaves, they become wakeful; and this is the reward of the holy man's act in cutting off his eyelids."

The Guild-women were exceedingly diverted with this story, and made a good many remarks about it. Then Mrs. Delaney said: "I have often put a pinch of soda in my teapot, Sister, to make the tea better. Do you think that is a good plan?"

"It is a good plan on one account," replied Sister Elizabeth; "it is not of any use for the flavour, or for the food to the nerves. But there is, besides these, a real nourishing substance, a kind of tea-meal, which is brought out by the soda. When you put a pinch of soda into your tea, you make it go as far as you can in the way of food. You ought also to drink it with milk and sugar, as that adds to the nourishing power. Coffee has nearly the same qualities as tea. It is made of the berry of a shrub which grows in Arabia, Ceylon, and the West Indies—all of them hot countries. These beans are roasted, and thrown up into the air to get cool, and then ground. Coffee has a white nerve-food,

or powder in it, like tea, but is rather more nourishing. Cocoa is the seed of an evergreen shrub in the West Indies and parts of America. The fruit in which the seed lies, like beans, is the size of a large melon. These beans have to be roasted like coffee, the husk broken off, and the rest broken up. When these bits or nibs are ground up into paste with sugar and vanilla, they are called chocolate. Cocoa has the same white nerve-powder as tea and coffee, and a nourishing meal; but it has also a rich oil, which makes it nearly as good a food as milk; so that for hard-working people it is much better than coffee or tea. But all three of them are most useful as drinks, and as helps with other food. The mistake is making them the chief food of the day, or looking upon them as a principal support. And now I want to know if any of our friends here will give us any good receipts, any ways of *making the best of things*. When our Blessed Lord fed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes, He had means in His hands to feed double the number, or to create bread out of the grass upon which they were sitting. The same power which increased and multiplied the quantities of bread and fish, could have created bread and fish out of the grass, or out of the air, or out of nothing. But He never gave an amazing instance of His power, without also leaving with it a lesson by which His creatures could profit. He made a practical deduction, as it were, from the stupendous miracle, that every child in your houses can and ought to practise. When they had eaten and were filled, He said: 'Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost' (St. John, vi. 12). Not a crumb of all this food was to be wanted, and oh! my dear friends, what a lesson this is for us in all things, if we would only

lay it to heart! How many things in our daily life we see spoiled, or wasted, or despised, which we might turn to an excellent account; and most especially the very crumbs of bread, which Jesus ordered to be stored! I do hope you will think more of this in future. *Do not give your children pieces of bread at all hours.* Teach them to obey without giving them a reward, especially so miserable a reward as something to eat. *Teach them early to restrain their wishes and appetites, and to eat only at mealtimes, as Christians should.* By this means you will instruct them, and hinder a continual waste of food. Now, Mrs. O'Donnell, I think you are a good housewife, and can give us an account of one way at least of making the most of dry crusts and pieces of bread."

"Well, Sister, I am sure if I am anything of a good manager, it is you I ought to thank for it," replied a round-faced, sturdy woman, smiling; "I never did anything for my husband and children but give 'em tea and bread and butter, just as you were saying a while ago. And a power of tea we drank. I am sure it is true about the badness of taking too much tea, though I dearly love a little in reason. But, dear me, my poor husband got thinner and paler, and shook so with want of sleep, you wouldn't believe how he was brought down. So I took to making up some of your receipts from the Home, Sister, and a few more I got, and now he is fresh and hearty as can be, thank God! As for the bread, I collect all the bits and ends, and even the crumbs, and put them into a close crock or pan, covered with hot water enough to soak into them, and cover them with a soup-plate or lid. Then they swell up, and get quite soft and large. I beat up this sop till it is

quite fine, and put in about two penn'orth of fresh mutton suet, or bacon fat, and a few potatoes, beaten fine, with a teaspoonful of salt. Then I tie it up in a cloth, and boil it well. It makes us all a fine dinner, especially if I have a little milk to mix it with. There is nothing the children like so well as what they call my puff-pudding."

"That is a good plan, to be sure," said Mrs. Lynch; "I shall try that to-morrow, please God I am alive! Why, it would hardly cost anything."

"There is another good dinner pudding made in the same way, with potatoes," said Mrs. O'Donnell. "You take large potatoes, and boil them mealy, and beat them up in a bowl with a little milk and butter. Roll them up into a large ball, and put it in the oven, and it will come out a very good dinner, especially for Fridays. We generally have that or rice-shape on Fridays or fast days."

"How do you make your rice-shape?" asked the Sister.

"I buy ground rice for that, Sister, in general, because it is less trouble," replied Mrs. O'Donnell. "But many will boil their rice whole in a cloth. I take the ground rice and mix it with milk and water, and beat it quite smooth. Very often I put a little Indian or corn-meal in, to give it strength; besides which, mixed flours have a much better taste than all one kind. I tie the mixture up in a cloth, and boil it well. If it is for Fridays, I put in a little butter, or dripping; if not, suet or bacon fat. Bacon dripping is capital for cooking, and less coarse to some stomachs than suet. When it is well boiled, the rice comes out a fine round ball, and is very good with coarse brown sugar, or a little treacle, which the children think a treat."

“What do you suppose to be the cost of such a pudding as that?” said Sister Elizabeth.

“About three half-pence, or a penny farthing, Sister; and it makes a good dinner for us all,” replied Mrs. O’Donnell. “It is a great deal more satisfying than bread, and I never found it make any of the children ill. They are grown to look quite like country-bred children now, and very seldom ail anything at all.”

“I have seen a very good pudding made with patent corn-flour,” said Sister Elizabeth. “It is done in a few minutes with milk, and is like barley-pudding. Children are so fond of it, that they prefer it even to meat.”

“I have heard of it, Sister,” replied Mrs O’Donnell; “I suppose Indian-meal is the same thing, only coarse-like. It is sweet and wholesome, either boiled or baked; and it makes a very good soup, with a beef-bone or two broken and boiled down.”

“Has any one else anything in the way of cooking to propose?” said Sister Elizabeth.

“My husband likes me to give him a dish of cowheel stew, when I can,” said Mrs. Toole. “Cowheel is a deal more nourishing than the calves’ feet they sell so dear; and if you are a judge, you can get them very wholesome in Clare Market. I stew them slowly in a pan, with half a pound of rice, and an onion or two sliced, and it makes a capital savoury dish. I simmer it in two quarts of cold water till it boils, and the meat comes well from the bone. Then, besides the stew, which is very good, I put the bones back, and simmer them again for two hours more. That makes two meals for a good large family, and costs 5d. for the

cowheel, 1d. for the rice, and 1d. for the onions and seasoning—that is, 7d. in all."

"That reminds me of another thing," said Mrs. Delaney; "some people throw away all sheep's lights for the cat; but if they are chopped up fine, and peppered and salted, and mixed with two tablespoonfuls of flour, and then popped into a pint of broth liquor and boiled up, it makes a very nice dish indeed."

"For those who have no oven," said Sister Elizabeth, "I have heard of a capital plan, which I want to tell you before I forget it. Put your stew, meat and onions, or meat and potatoes, into a jug full of cold water; stand this jug in a large two-gallon saucepan, and put it on the fire. When the stew is nearly done, put in two tablespoonfuls of flour, and pepper and salt. Liver can be very well stewed in this way; also, a quarter of a pound of rice: it will suck up all the water in the jug, and come out quite clean and sweet."

"What a good plan!" exclaimed Mrs. Toole. "In that way we really might manage, for some of us are sadly off for ovens. I wish somebody would set about and build a row of proper houses for poor people—not grand buildings, like Peabody's lodging-houses, but rows of cottages at a low rent, with a sink, and cold water, and an oven, and a proper dust-hole. We really cannot be tidy, if we tried ever so, and we cannot cook much without an oven. But this plan will be a help at least, and I shall try it as soon as I can."

"I saw a very good pudding made lately," said Mrs. Lynch. "A neighbour of mine had boiled too many potatoes, and instead of setting them by, she mashed them up well, put half a pound of flour, a quarter of a

pound of mutton suet, and a little salt, and mixed it all up together without any water. It was tied up in a cloth, put into boiling water, and boiled for two hours. They had a capital dinner off this pudding."

"I have no doubt of it," said Sister Elizabeth; "and then, indeed, the 'crumbs' were gathered up, and nothing was lost, as our Blessed Lord so beautifully recommends. The same plan may be followed in everything. The good French housewives, in the north and west of France, are such famous or acknowledged cooks and managers, that if a gentleman has been unfortunate, and has his affairs involved, he is recommended to set them right by marrying a Norman wife. These clever, prudent women put every crumb and shaving of bread, every little scrap of bone and gristle, every paring of vegetable, into a pot which they keep always simmering on one end or side of the stove. Thus, by degrees, a thick, nourishing soup is extracted from materials which in this country would be thrown into the hog-tub, the dust-hole, or the gutters. I recommend you all to remember and profit by this lesson. Those who live in the Whitechapel neighbourhood will soon learn it, for the new dining-rooms in Commercial-street will teach them what can be done. You know, perhaps, that quantities of working men, and, indeed, clerks and others as well, dine there every day in the best way for 4½d., and yet the establishment pays.\* This shows us how wastefully we use food in general. I sincerely hope and believe that these dining-rooms will be established hereabouts, and in all the crowded parts of London and other large towns; and then your

See Note A.

girls would soon learn how to cook and economise food.

“ And now it is just time for us to break up, and say our rosary before dispersing ; but before we separate, I wish to impress upon you all the real value of what we have been discussing to-night. It is not that the whole study of your lives should be to be as comfortable as possible, and try to ensure the best dinners, as some might think ; but wherever God has called any of us to married life, we know that it is His will also that the wife should study in all ways *to make her home pleasant and attractive to her husband*. That beautiful word, *Husband*, means the band or bond that knits the whole house together in one. And the old name of the wife in this country was, the *Housewoman*, or *Housewife*. The *house*, or *home*, is most particularly her kingdom, her province, the field of her labour, the work appointed by God for her to do. If she is always out of the house, the work she ought to be doing goes undone. The children are wandering into bad company, the house is dirty and neglected, the meals are not provided, nothing is in order. The wife’s place is *at home* ; and she will save a thousand times more, and bring a greater blessing on the family, by being there, than by earning large wages at outdoor work. She has to wash, to mend, to make, to cook, and to clean ; and human strength cannot do more, unless she can take sewing into the house. If the house is clean, the little fire made up, the few plates and cups as bright as hands can make them, the children clean and well-patched, instead of trailing their rags through all the filth of the streets, the husband will enjoy returning to his meals, and will wish to stay at home, instead of

going to the public-house. The wife ought to dress for her husband, to wash for her husband, to make her hair smooth for her husband, to smooth all the wrinkles of vexation, and to soften her voice, and be ready with a smile for her husband, that he may be cheered and attracted by his home. If she does this, she will be blessed in his sober and industrious life, blessed in his affection and kindness to a late old age, and blessed by the approval of her own conscience and an eternal reward."

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#### NOTE A.

The cooking depot in Commercial-street, Whitechapel, is in a handsome four-storied house, one of a set of new buildings lately erected. The kitchen is on the basement floor. On the first floor are the general dining-rooms; on the second there is a public breakfast every day, from eight o'clock till eleven; a public dinner, from twelve till three; and a public tea, from four till seven.

The meals are served and regulated by a matron, a sub-matron, a clerk, a cook, and eighteen waiters. The waiters are dressed in a neat uniform, and they, with the clerk and cook, are all young women. The only man in the department is the porter, who carries the heavy goods up and down the stairs. By this service, the girls learn cooking, waiting, and quick, dextrous habits, as well as cleanliness, neatness, and punctuality. The establishment affords, therefore, not only a good training for servants, but for wives and mothers also.

Inside the door a small office is fenced off, in which the matron and clerk sits. They take and enter the payments of those who come in, and give to each one in return a ticket according to what is asked for, which is given up as soon as he is seated at one of the tables. This serves as the check or security on both sides. It is a pleasant thing for the diners to sit in a large, clean, cheerful room, with plenty of light and air, and where the eye is pleased with the pretty decorations around him. They pay the moderate sum of 4½d., and have an excellent dinner of soup, a plate of meat and potatoes, bread and plum pudding. Beer is now allowed at a very moderate price. The teas and breakfasts are 3d. a head.

The rent, rates, and taxes have cost £220.

Matron, per week,	.	.	.	.	£1	5	0
Porter, do.	.	.	.	.	0	12	0
Sub-Matron, do.	.	.	.	.	0	10	0
Clerk, do.	.	.	.	.	0	10	0
Cook, do.	.	.	.	.	0	10	0
Eighteen girls, at 6s. a week each	.				5	8	0
					<hr/>		
					£8	15	0
Weekly rate of £220, say	.	.	.	.	4	4	0
					<hr/>		
					£12	19	0

Notwithstanding this weekly outgoing of all but £13, there has been already, from the Commercial-street dining-rooms, a clear profit of £30. What is there, then, to prevent any prudent and careful persons from undertaking such an establishment? The managers of these dining-rooms, from the very first, most wisely refused to allow them to subsist through donations, or

to be in any way placed on the footing of a charity. If such an establishment could not support itself, they judiciously observed, it was better that it should not exist. It would not be the *reality* which they desired, and which alone would show it to be a want of the people. Anything founded on an artificial or exotic principle of patronage must, before long, fall to the ground. The result has fully and satisfactorily justified their views.

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SELF-SUPPORTING COOKING DEPOT,

COMMERCIAL-STREET, WHITECHAPEL,

OPEN FROM SEVEN, A.M., TILL SEVEN, P.M.

PRICES:

(Always ready.)

Cup of tea or coffee	.	.	One Penny.
Bread and butter	.	.	One Penny.
Bread and cheese	.	.	One Penny.
Slice of bread	.	.	One Penny.
Boiled egg	.	.	One Penny.
Ginger beer	.	.	One Penny.

FROM TWELVE TILL THREE.

Bowl of Scotch broth	.	.	One Penny.
Bowl of soup	.	.	One Penny.
Plate of potatoes	.	.	One Penny.
Do. Minced beef	.	.	Twopence.
Do. Cold beef	.	.	Twopence.
Do. Cold ham	.	.	Twopence.
Do. Plum pudding or rice	.	.	One Penny.

DINNER, FROM TWELVE TO THREE.

Bowl of soup or broth, plate of cold beef or ham, plate of potatoes, and plum pudding or rice—4½d.

## NOTE B.

The valuable inquiries into the nature of the different kinds of food, so minutely entered into by Dr. Edward Smith, are now embodied in his voluminous and exhaustive Report to the Privy Council. Out of the vast stores of scientific details then collected, it may be useful to gather several most important practical principles for every day use, beyond those which are already embodied in the tale. He justly deprecates *the valuing of pigs, calves, and hounds, above the necessities of the poor*, by appropriating to these animals the milk which ought to be sold at a low price by large proprietors, or given away. Whatever milk, whether new, skim, or buttermilk, is used, there is a larger amount of health and strength in the working population.

Wherever there is a free use of potatoes, meal, and milk, meat and fats are not necessary.

Meal (or what are usually now called breadstuffs), milk, and cheese, also supply the place of meat.

Various preparations of oatmeal are found to be very nourishing and wholesome. In one case, the oatmeal is steeped in water twenty-four or thirty-six hours, skimmed when it begins to ferment, boiled till it is like gruel, and eaten with treacle or coarse sugar. Another preparation is when the oatmeal husks only are steeped in the like manner, boiled till the oatmeal becomes a thick jelly, when it can be turned out in a shape, and eaten with treacle or milk.

## THE NEW SERVANT.

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### CHAPTER I.

 SIR, I am very sorry to say that to-day is the last week of Margaret's schooling."

"Why, Mrs. Foley, what's up? Your husband out of work? Surely not that?"

"No, sir, thank God! He has fine wages now.

But Margaret is gone fourteen, sir, and a tall girl she is. I have found her a place, sir."

"A good place, then, I hope? None of your 'shilling-a-week and find yourself' public houses?"

"No, sir, I am glad to say I would keep Margaret out of that as long as I live. She is going to be under housemaid to Mrs. Walmesley."

"Ah! that's another matter altogether," said the good priest, with a relieved face. "Well, Mrs. Foley, you did a good day's work for yourself and Margaret when you settled that stroke of business. I suspect you have been asking St. Joseph about it; eh?"

"Indeed, father," said Mrs. Foley, smiling and colouring a little; "I did ask St. Joseph, and got it recommended to Our Lady of Sorrows; and I was sure Margie would get a good place."

"To be sure; to be sure! Nothing like having a good friend or two at court, my child! And mind, don't ask

for things and not say thank you, as we are all too apt to do. Go to Communion in thanksgiving, and ask that Margaret may persevere and do well. She is a good child at present—a good dear little girl; but her temper is hot, she has a tongue, and she likes pleasure. Sugar and cake are all very well now and again; the soul as well as the body requires a few sweets at times; but sugar and cake won't carry us through life, and we must not crave for too much of them. Try to make Margaret see that life is made up of *labour and service, service and labour*, like Our Blessed Lord's at Nazareth. There is our pattern, and we must not work our copy just the contrary way, as too many do. Idleness and liberty will never make us anything like Him. Get her to stick to her work, to love her work, and to obey her mistress, and she will do well."

"I'll not forget your words, father. I thank you kindly, sir."

The tidy, well-meaning woman curtsied, and Mr. Barrow—for it was no other than our genial old friend—nodded at her in his quick, kind way, and went upstairs to his girls' school, which he was this morning going to examine.

Mrs. Foley went on her way to Mrs. Walmesley's house.

That lady was occupied in sundry indescribable ways in her pretty drawing-room. She had heard Mass, had breakfasted, had ordered dinner, and given out certain necessary stores, and was now giving those delicate touches, which, apparently, only a mistress and a lady can give, to the different things in her room. Servants are apt to push the tables out of place, to set down the chairs crooked and irregularly, to disarrange the books,

and gradually to loosen and undermine the symmetrical proportions of everything in the room. The universal dissolution and thaw of nature, of which Shakespeare speaks, the gradual change and ruin which the elements make in the fairest aspect of natural scenery and objects, are all fairly represented and worked out by ordinary servants in ordinary every-day life. There is probably no manner of doubt, that in the upper regions of society, in the households of dukes and earls, in sunny spots of Belgravia and Mayfair, scattered jewels of the domestic race may still shine, rare gems of that class still linger; and that grooms of the chamber, with salaries thrice as high as that of a University Professor, may still be found practising the principles of high art in the arrangement of my lady's drawing-rooms, and disposing their colours and their contrasts to the satisfaction of Chevreuil or Ruskin. But we are not now soaring into those rarified regions of upper air; we are still—the painful truth must be told—we are still within an easy distance of Tottenham Court Road. Mrs. Walmesley had rearranged her writing-table and books, and was snipping the unsightly leaves and stalks from her geraniums and azaleas, when the door opened—“ If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Foley is here about her girl.”

“ Tell her to step in. See that she wipes her shoes, Jane.”

Mrs. Foley curtsied at the door, looking round with a pleased air, as if the pretty room was in some sort now her own property.

“ I wanted to see you, Mrs. Foley, about Margaret's things,” said Mrs. Walmesley. “ Will you sit down for a few minutes? What have you got for her?”

“ I have not got anything, ma'am, as yet,” replied

**Mrs. Foley.** "The truth is, ma'am, we got a little behindhand with the rent; and when my husband went steady to work again, I squeezed all I could out of his wages for our landlord; and that, and our living, and the children's schooling and clothes, swallow up every penny. We have five children, ma'am, at home."

"So Margaret tells me," said the lady; "and that was one reason why I fixed on her; for as I cannot do a great deal, I always try to look out where the means can be best applied."

**Mrs. Foley** got up and curtsied. "May God reward you, ma'am; that was very kind in you!"

"It is not *kindness* so much as a *principle*," said Mrs. Walmesley, smiling pleasantly. "You see, Mrs. Foley, that any one who wishes to lead a *wise* life, a life regulated according to the laws and intentions of God, must give a little thought and study to it, so as to *plan it out*. Anybody who takes the trouble to do this, will find the benefit of it. Most people, unfortunately, do not plan out their lives and their days at all. They get up in the morning, go on with anything that comes uppermost, and when they go to bed at night, they find that everything they have done through the day is useless. For want of this planning, time is wasted, bad company is sought, and many evil words and evil thoughts are laid up against us, which we might have avoided. Then, if a little time and study were given to planning how to spend the week's wages, much more good would be got out of them, and a little saving, too, for sickness or a bad time. It was for this that God gave us *memory* and *reason*—a memory to think over past mistakes, and reason to put together better plans for the future;

and by not using the powers of our soul, we really do get to live like perishing animals."

" Well, and indeed you say truly," replied Mrs. Foley. " I have found that, ma'am; for when my husband was out of work, I got used to thinking and thinking how to make the little we had go furthest; and very hard work it was to reckon, and stretch, and make one thing fit into another; but when once I got used to it, I liked it, because I made so much more out of the money; and one chief thing was, that I got things for the children in turn, instead of all at once, as I used to do."

" Yes; that is a good plan," said Mrs. Walmesley. " Some mothers that I know will go out and spend everything they have in buying the children boots a-piece all round. Why, you know, many ladies cannot do that. They are obliged to look forward, and manage, and buy one thing now and another then, and deny themselves something to make the money go far enough. Well, now about Margaret. What has she been used to have?"

" Two good frocks, ma'am, or perhaps three, while she was at school; a petticoat, and an under stuff one, and her stays, and two shifts, and two pair of stockings, and a pair of boots; she has a nice hat and cloak for Sundays, and a good brown hat and a cape for school, and she has a new *crinerline* as her aunt gave her."

Mrs. Walmesley smiled. " What shall you say, or what will Margaret say, if I ask her to leave the crino-line at home?"

" Well, ma'am, I know many ladies *does* object to *crinerlines*," replied Mrs. Foley, half regretfully: " but when girls gets as big as Margie, in course they likes

to look like everybody else. If you'll excuse me the words, ma'am, I could not but laugh the last Sunday, when her father was objecting to Margie taking up so much room in the house, and she laughed, and put her arms round his neck, and said, 'Why, father dear, you would not like me to go out an awful guy?'"

"The old story," said Mrs. Walmesley, half sighing to herself, as she snipped off an obstinate leaf energetically. "The old, old story without an end!"

"Ma'am," said Mrs. Foley, not catching the words.

"You must tell Margaret what I say," replied Mrs. Walmesley, resuming her usual calm and sweet manner. "She will get over her disappointment after a time, and I shall not require her to make herself conspicuous, or very unlike other people; but I think she may well dispense with hoops till she is a little older—at least for the present. Then, I think you will not be offended if I say that you must look a little more to her under things than to what is merely to be seen. This is the common fault among poor people in this country, and it is a very great pity. I have been a great deal in France and Belgium, and there the working classes, who are much poorer than here, would be ashamed not to lay up a proper outfit of linen for themselves and their daughters. They prepare a good stock of shifts, caps, and handkerchiefs, sheets, table-cloths, and towels, all of stout, strong linen; and without procuring this, they would be ashamed to let any of their daughters marry. Then they have very good woollen petticoats and gowns, so strong and well-made that they last many years. I wish we did the same."

"Well, ma'am, indeed you are right," replied Mrs.

Foley; "but, you see, we mostly follow one another. Everybody gets cheap things for the time; when there's an end of them, they get more of the same kind."

"That is exactly the truth," said Mrs. Walmesley; "Well, I should like you to get for Margaret six shifts and six pair of good stockings (unbleached stockings of Scotch make), three night-gowns and caps, two pair of stays, six pocket-handkerchiefs, and three flannel petticoats of strong gray flannel. I do not like stuff under-petticoats, because they are not really clean; the stuff does not wash, and no one should wear an under-petticoat long without washing. Every one of these things, except the stays, you can get at Saint Martha's Home, and I will give you an order for them. You must get a good pair of boots for her yourself, and two pair of common silent house shoes. The rest I will advance, and she must repay me in small sums out of her wages."

Mrs. Foley was overwhelmed with gratitude, for in truth Margaret's outfit had lain heavy at her heart. Mrs. Walmesley then wrote down the list of things, and a few words at the end for Sister Anne, who had charge of the clothing shop at the Home. As she gave the list to Mrs. Foley she said, "Of course Margaret must have a bonnet and cloak; but I think my servant can choose for you better than anyone else, as she knows where to go. If you will send Margaret here at seven this evening, Jane shall take her out, and get her fitted with both."

Mrs. Foley curtsied again, and warmly thanking Mrs. Walmesley for her kindness, she took her leave, and went home with a glad heart to detail all the circumstances of her visit.

Mrs. Walmesley was an out-door Associate of the

Guild of the Sorrowful Heart. She was a widow, with one son reading for the bar, but still making his home in her house. He was a clever rising young man, determined to battle his way through the thorny obstacles that beset a young barrister's progress; but of late he had been much thrown among other fellow-Templars, with little or no religion, or with loose views on all the Christian doctrines, so that Rokewode Walmesley had grown lukewarm in his own religious practise, and, alas! his mother feared, with the aching fears a mother only can know, had also allowed doubting thoughts to enter his own mind, and doubting or doubtful words to pass his lips. But, like a wise mother, she kept silence with him on this subject, and only sought to make his home by every means more attractive to him. She well knew that women are easily led by ascetic impulses or by an over-zealous direction, to which they also give a colouring of their own, to cast aside all the minor charities and pleasanter duties of life, and to riot in the excess of good works, which they seek and invent for themselves. She had seen aged fathers, infirm and ailing mothers, husbands who gave way to what they disliked for the sake of peace; she had seen all these left in solitude, and to the long hours of an invalid's room; while those who should have been ministering to them, beguiling their weariness with reading, or pleasant talk, or a little music, were miles away from their homes, praying for hours in some favourite church, undertaking the work of subsidiary sacristans, performing impossible labours in aid of bazaars, or attending exciting meetings, which, by creating fresh undertakings, lent new obstacles to their lawful employments at home.

And Mrs. Walmesley was wise in time. She followed her quiet, hidden life, as an associate; was invaluable to Mr. Barrow as an aid and helper of souls, but beyond her own parish she was little seen and seldom heard of. It was for her son that she had kept on her large, roomy house, that she had furnished so prettily her ample drawing-rooms, that she followed up the literature of the day, and carefully cultivated her talents for drawing and music. And as she had formerly dressed for her husband, so now she dressed for Rokewode; consulted his tastes, chose his favorite colours, and was, as he sometimes laughingly said, "the most darling dandy of his acquaintance." Deep down in Rokewode's heart lay his great safeguard—his devoted love, his veneration, mixed with the tenderest affection, for "his own sweet, lovely mother-angel."

So it was for Rokewode that Mrs. Walmesley *fadded* about her drawing-room, and so carefully snipped and coaxed her flowers.

She had a great lion-coloured Persian cat, too, with the brush of a fox, and a fine ruff, and ringlets in his ears like any sailor.

I am almost afraid Mrs. Walmesley was, after all, a frivolous woman.

## CHAPTER II.

 "Now, Margaret, I want to see you do this room;" said Mrs. Walmesley, a few days after Margaret Foley's arrival at her house.

"What should you do the first thing?"

Margaret looked bright, and replied: "Please, 'm, the fire."

"Just the very first thing of all? Well, how shall you set about it?"

Margaret showed her white, round teeth a little, and said: "Please, 'm, shall I fetch the coal-box and the wood, and begin?"

"Yes; fetch them in."

Enter Margaret, triumphant, with a coal-scuttle and etceteras. She set it down on the rug, and was beginning to seize the fine steel poker, preparatory to raking out the cinders and ashes. Mrs. Walmesley had given orders that nothing should be touched in the room this morning, and she had put off going to Mass till half-past eight, that she might, according to her custom, *inaugurate* the new little maid.

"Stay a minute, Margaret. Shall you use that nice bright poker to rake out the ashes?"

"No, 'm," said Margaret penitently; "I forgot." She took a stick of firewood—"Must I always do that?"

"It is a very good plan," replied her mistress. "Or you may bring up one of the short iron pokers—but you

must always keep it with your things, so that it can be found. Now, stay again. Shall you put the dirty scuttle down on my nice rug, and rake ashes over it?"

"Oh! no 'm—I beg your pardon—I was very stupid. Must I always turn back the rug?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Mrs. Walmesley. "And you have forgotten what was done before that too. Look round the room."

Poor Margaret's cheeks were by this time of a deep crimson. She got up and went out of the room, and soon returned with several large, coarse, white wrappers, which she threw dexterously over the couches and book cheffoniers. Then she turned up the table-covers over the books and ornaments, and folded the ends of the curtains over the curtain pegs. Mrs. Walmesley smiled, and Margaret knew she was pleased. She said: "I think you will make a good little servant, by-and-bye. Should you not like to be a very good one?"

"Yes, 'm, indeed I should," replied Margaret. She was again on her knees, folded back the rug, and was armed with the poker, when her mistress said:

"Where are your gloves, my child?"

"Gloves, 'm? They are upstairs in my box," replied Margaret, opening her eyes.

"No, my child, I mean your housemaid's gloves," said her mistress, smiling.

"I never had any, 'm," said the little girl, wondering what was to come next.

"Listen, my child. You are quick and intelligent, and I am sure you will make a good servant," said Mrs. Walmesley. "I know that a good many common servants do not use gloves, or take the trouble to put them on if they have them. But will you tell me what colour your

hands will be when you have finished the grate? They are not very far off it now."

Margaret looked at her hands, a little ashamed, but she could not help smiling, as she answered: "They will be black, 'm—quite black."

"And will it be a black that comes off? said her mistress.

"Oh! yes, 'm, it comes off with washing quite easily," replied Margaret, confidently.

"But what I am afraid of," said Mrs. Walmesley, smiling, "is that it will come off without washing. It will come off the first thing, on my couches and chairs, and table-covers."

Margaret laughed. "Yes, 'm sure it will. That is what the gloves is for, 'm—is it that what you mean?"

"Mrs. Walmesley got up, and went to a cupboard somewhere outside the room, and returned with a pair of housemaid's gloves. "Now, Margaret, put them on, and mind you keep them *with your things*, that you may know where to find them. And begin gently, to make as little dust as possible. First pick out the large cinders with your hand, and then rake with the poker. Some servants make a great noise and fuss, without really emptying the grate, and fill the room with ashes."

Margaret did exactly as she was told, and the grate was cleverly emptied. She then black-leaded and polished it, which she did very well, and took the coal-scuttle and cinders and ashes down stairs.

"What are you going to do with those?" asked her mistress, who had first made her open the windows.

"I shall throw them in the dust-hole," replied Margaret, confidently.

"That is what I supposed," replied Mrs. Walmesley. "Come with me, and I will show you how to manage."

Margaret thought this was a very particular lady; but somehow she liked her notwithstanding, better than any other she had seen. They went down stairs, through the scullery, and out to the area. There was the dust-hole, and in another division, the ashes. Over the ashes was a fine riddle, or sieve, so hung that it could be shaken. "Now, Margaret, pour your scuttleful gently into this sieve, and shake the ashes through it." Margaret did so, and the ashes fell through in a fine shower, and the cinders were left behind. "All that you see left here, must be put in this division;" said her mistress, and she opened a third door. "Look, here are the cinders which are to be burned over again. The cook pours water upon them, and they are always burned over again in the kitchen and other places. Mind, my child, that you never throw either ashes or cinders into the dust-hole. It is wasteful and troublesome. The ashes are sold for manure, to spread over the land. But it is quite enough for you now *to do as I tell you*. Sometime afterwards I will explain to you the reasons."

They went upstairs again, and Margaret made her fire. Mrs. Walmesley then showed her how to "build" it, so as to use the least quantity of wood and kindling. Margaret was surprised to hear that her mistress cared about such things, or that it signified. She was more surprised still to hear that she only allowed a certain quantity of wood each week. One bundle to three fires. She was shown how to lay the sticks in a kind of pyramid, wide at the bottom, and meeting together at the top: then to put on some large lumps of coal, and set it on fire. When the sticks had well kindled, to add more

coal. Her mistress told her this was to make a *free draught of air*. She said that servants often leave cinders and dust in the grate, so as to prevent the air from entering underneath. Then they stuff in a wadding of paper, and a quantity of sticks, lying anyhow; and then pile it up with coal, cinders, and dust. By this means, their mistress and themselves are well tired out, and cross besides, before the fire will burn, besides burning three or four kindlings of wood. "You think very little of that, I am sorry to see," said Mrs. Walmesley, looking at Margaret's face.

"Oh! ma'm," exclaimed Margaret, blushing and surprised to find her thoughts read as clearly as if her mind had been made of glass. "Well, I was thinking that that would be a great deal to us, but not much account to a lady like you, 'm!"

"That is too common an idea," replied Mrs. Walmesley; "and I suppose that is what makes so many servants so careless, as to become in the end, dishonest with their masters' things. There is no lady or gentleman in the world, my child, so rich that they cannot be injured by waste. They have always enough to do with their money, and the richer they are, the more subscriptions they are asked for, and the more they have to spend. But it is not only that, Margaret. I dislike and forbid waste in my house, for a higher reason. Who made all the things there are in the world?"

"Almighty God, ma'm," replied Margaret. "He made the world, and all that is in it, in six days."

"Quite right. And therefore all the things in the world are His," said her mistress. "The trees that give us the wood, the coal that comes out of the mines, the iron and steel for our fenders and fire-irons, the corn

which makes our bread—everything we eat, or wear, or use—belongs to Him; and He is the Master of it all, as well as of us. We may not waste or spoil His goods, any more than we may spoil and ruin ourselves by sin and carelessness, and bad habits. *He likes to preserve and take care of everything, little and great.* If He counts the hairs of our heads, depend upon it, He also reckons the sticks His children burn in every fire; and, if you say to yourself with each one you save: ‘I will do this; I will take care of this, for God’s sake,’ He will certainly give you a reward. I wish you, my child, to do what I tell you, and to seek to please me in my service; but I wish you a thousand times more to seek to please God, and to do every action of the day for Him. Will you remember this?”

Margaret thought she should never forget it.

The next thing was to sweep the room. Her mistress showed her how to move the things on one side first, so as to get all that space clear. Then to take the stiff brush, and sweep off all the dust, and bits, and flue, neatly into the dust-pan. Then to move the things back upon the swept space of floor, and so, by degress, to go with method over the room. This was at last happily accomplished, though from want of habit, Margaret was not very clever yet with her brush. She put all her strength to the work, to be sure, and hammered and scraped away at a fine rate, throwing all the dust up into the air.

“Gently, Margaret, gently!” said her mistress, who was in danger of choking. “Do not use such force, my child. Sweep along *from* you, and as lightly as possible. The more lightly you sweep, the more dust you will get into the dust-pan. Now look at me: Mrs. Walmesley

took the dust-pan and brush, and lightly and dexterously brushed a piece of the carpet. After this, Margaret got on much better, for she was heartily anxious to do her work well. The windows were then set wide open for five minutes, and during that time, Margaret was set to polish and rub the fire-irons. When Mrs. Walmesley came back, the air was clear, and the room delightfully fresh, and Margaret was told to take her clean duster and dust-brush, and go over everything in it slightly and carefully. The window-curtains were shaken out, and spread properly; the books wiped lightly, and laid on one side; the table-covers shaken out of the window. Every table, book-case, slab, and chair, were carefully dusted; and Mrs. Walmesley made Margaret remark the dust that lurked on the pedestals of the tables, the piano, the backs of the arm-chairs; the ledges of the wainscot, and the panels of the doors.

“The great secret of cleanliness, Margaret, is careful dusting,” said her mistress; “and it is a great secret of health too. Dust chokes up our rooms, and makes them stuffy and close; and it chokes up our lungs, and the pores of our skin, and prevents the blood from circulating, and the perspiration from escaping as it ought. It is only bad servants who depend upon great cleanings now and then, and who neglect the little daily work of dusting. They are like those foolish people, who depend upon two or three confessions in the year, and who never examine their consciences as every-day duty. They get into a very great mess, and then wonder where all the dirt comes from.”

Margaret smiled. “You remind me of what Father Barrow used to say to us when we were being instructed for confession in school, ma’am. He had used to tell

us to look well into the corners. He did not mind a good heap of dirt swept into the middle of the room, where he could see it, he said; but he couldn't abide it hidden out of sight in the corners."

"I am of Father Barrow's mind," replied Mrs. Walmesley; "And I am glad you remember his instructions so well. He is one of the very best teachers I know, and you ought to be grateful to him all your life, Margaret. I hope, my child, you will show gratitude in the best way, by 'deeds, not words.' Now, do you not think the drawing-room looks nice?"

"O yes, please 'm, indeed I do!" exclaimed Margaret. "The tables and chairs do so shine, and the glass shades, and everything, It is quite a pleasure to look at it."

"Well, do not forget that it is *your labour* that has made it look so pleasant;" said her mistress. "Never grudge your trouble, Margaret, for this is a great secret of good service, both to God and man. Never say—'Oh! it is not worth while!' *It is always worth while to do everything as well as it can be done.* Either do it well, or let it alone. There is a curse on any one that does the work of God negligently, and I hope everything you do will be for Him. Now you must go down to breakfast, that is the servants' bell."

Margaret curtsied, and went off with a light heart.

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## CHAPTER III.

 AMMA, my bed-room is not by any means ship-shape," said Rokewode Walmesley, one morning to his mother, looking up from behind the *Times*.

"No? What has happened to it?" replied she, rousing herself out of a long letter from a friend in Rome.

"Well, I don't know the names of things, you know," said the young man, laughing, as he passed his hand lightly down his long tawny whiskers, and then applied himself to his bacon and fresh egg. "The bed seems made of lumps, to begin with, and the towels all hang askew; and they're sometimes flabby. And the dressing-table seems to have had a hurricane over it generally. And as to the top of my soap-dish—by Jove! this morning I thought the sweeps must have been in, and made free!"

A panic shot across Mrs. Walmesley's mind. "Is it possible?" she said, more hastily than was usual with her. "I can scarcely think Jane would do such a thing!"—She stopped suddenly.

"Do what?—let in the sweeps?" asked Rokewode, laughingly. "Has she got a 'follower' then, among the honourable chimney-scrapers?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Walmesley, smiling; "I meant that it was surely impossible she could have left

your room, after all my strict injunctions, to little Margaret."

A dark flush crossed the young man's handsome and open face. "Oh! by Jove, mother! Have you let another little charity concern into the house? Among my things, too! Perhaps she does her hair with my brushes—Confound it all!"

"Now, dear Rokewode!" said his mother, gently. "Don't run away on your wooden horse. Margaret has been nicely brought up, and I will go bail for her," she added, smiling. "I know she has a looking-glass, and a capital hair brush of her own. But you may be sure, dear, I will look to it the first thing after breakfast," and if mistress Jane *has* been so careless, she shall get a good blowing up."

"*Can* you blow up, mamma? You had better retain me on your side, I think."

"Thank you; you would blow down, I am afraid," said his mother, laughing. "Don't you be saucy, sir, or I shall try my hand on you. In general, I believe, the house is cleaner than wont, and the servants change less."

"That is true, I know, as far as the house goes," replied Rokewode, getting up from the table. "And as to the maids, I must say, they do you credit, mamma. One never sees them by any chance; and when one does, they look as maids ought—as neat as new pins. Do you want anything done to-day, for I must be off?"

"If you see Richard Boyle, will you ask him and Sybella to dinner to-morrow, or, if they cannot do that, to come in the evening? The Leightons are coming in for some music."

"That's a darling!" exclaimed Rokewode, "I'll see Richard and make him come. Be sure you look after

my traps, mamma." He bent his tall form and kissed her, stroked the big cat, who was purring and trampling beside him to beg a word of notice, and was gone.

Mrs. Walmesley rang the bell, and while waiting for it to be answered, she said a little prayer as usual for her son, and another that she might not speak in haste to her servants. She never found fault with them, or made an inquiry into any part of their conduct without first doing this. Jane answered the bell, bringing up the tray to clear the breakfast table.

"Jane," said her mistress, "I am afraid you have forgotten one thing that I told you when Margaret came. Can you think of anything yourself?"

Jane put down the tray and stood thinking. "No, ma'am, I am not aware of anything."

"Did you not leave Mr. Walmesley's room to her lately?"

The colour rushed to Jane's face. "I got her to help me with the room, ma'am, because I was rather behind."

"I am afraid it was more than help, Jane; I wish you would tell me exactly how it was."

This was more than Jane had courage for. She took refuge, as most women do, in a counter-attack. "I am very sorry, ma'am, it really do seem very hard as I can't give satisfaction! I get up early, and am always at work; and slave and slave! What with the door, and the bells, and the company of evenings, and the plate, and the stairs, and the fires,—I'm sure no one knows what the work is! My feet do quite ache, and my back too, going up all those endless ladders of stairs! And then these girls, ma'am, it is tell, tell, tell, every minute; and when one's back is turned, then they go and do everything upside down directly, and one has to tell

over again! I'm sure I'd a deal rather do the work myself, ma'am; I would indeed. And Mr. Walmesley, he is such a very particular gentleman about his things, ma'am, and if one goes in to do anything before he is out of the house, or after he comes in, he looks just as if one were going to poison him! And you have always been such a good missis to me, ma'am." Here the storm-cloud, as is usual when they are storm-clouds-feminine, suddenly burst into rain, and Jane began to sob and cry with her apron at her eyes.

"Now Jane," said her mistress, very gently and gravely; "why are you putting yourself into such a state of trouble? This is the old story, Jane, which I thought we had done with. Sit down for a few minutes, and let us get to the bottom of it. Shall I tell you what I think it is? You have not been to confession very lately."

Jane's tears had begun to flow faster, but more quietly. There was something inexpressibly comforting and soothing in Mrs. Walmesley's voice. It sounded like that of a real, earnest friend, and it was so very calm. "I have not been so regular, ma'am," said Jane, at last.

"I do not think it is irregular work that has hindered you," said her mistress, again. "I think every Saturday you have been free, according to my usual rule?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane, almost inaudible.

"Something has kept you back?" said Mrs. Walmesley. "Is it trouble of mind, or have you got into any puzzle or worry about your duties? Trust me with your mind, Jane. I think you have never repented of doing so."

Jane's tears flowed very fast. There were evidently two sources for them. One of trouble and one of sorrow, both contending for mastery. At last the trouble came out. "I have done wrong, ma'am. I have deceived

you! Oh! oh! I am so sorry. I have been so unhappy!"

"Do not deceive me any longer, Jane. Come, the truth will go far to making you happy again."

Jane got up and knelt down on the rug by her mistress. "I did leave Mr. Walmesley's room to Margaret them days, ma'am. I was making a new gown and trimming a bonnet to go out in. And—and—I went out one evening, ma'am."

"Who did you go out with?" asked her mistress, seeing that her courage was failing again.

"With Mr. Harper, ma'am—to the play," in a very low voice.

"I am sorry for that," replied Mrs. Walmesley, gently and gravely. "I am sorry for it as you are now yourself. But Jane, I am more glad than I can tell you that you have told me this yourself. I am very much obliged to you, and thank you for trusting me. Why did you not trust me at the time, and tell me you wished to go to the play? There is no harm in that, though I do not like it as a practice. But I feel very sorry you should let that man, Harper, hang about you, for I am sure he would not be a good husband for you. I am afraid, too, that he has no thoughts of marrying, and only talks to you to amuse himself and pass the time. You are above that kind of thing, Jane, and I think you have too much sense to go on with it."

"Indeed, ma'am," said Jane, colouring, and her eyes sparkling. "If I thought he was that kind of man, I would soon pack him off! I did think—you know, ma'am," she said hesitatingly. "Of course, service is very well while it lasts, ma'am; 'tis sure servants may well be happy in your house, and with you ma'am, but

one cannot but look forward a little, and wish to have a home of one's own."

"Certainly, I quite agree with you," replied her mistress. "You are quite right, and it would be a want of wisdom not to do so. All I wish for my servants, if they have not a clear religious vocation, is, that they should marry well and do for themselves. But it is necessary to look well at a man before you marry him. Find out his habits, and who are his friends, and what his life has been, before you decide. And now I will ask you to promise to give no encouragement to Harper for a little while, and I will try all I can to find out if what I have heard of him is true. You can do the same. Will you promise this?"

"Indeed, indeed, I will, ma'am!" exclaimed Jane, most gratefully.

"And there is one thing more," said Mrs. Walmesley. "It is this. You know partly why I am so particular about Mr. Walmesley's being comfortable, and you should make it a very serious matter to follow my orders about him. The next time you want to neglect any of your work, leave my room undone, but never his."

"Oh! ma'am, I can't say how sorry I am! Indeed, indeed, I can't!" said poor Jane, quite overwhelmed by these words. "No one but you would ever say so, or overlook what you have done. You will have your reward, ma'am. Indeed, I will try to do better; I will get ready and go to my duty in a day or two."

"Do so, and keep to it, and you will never fail to get strength and help," replied her mistress. "Now, clear away the things, and when you have done so, send Margaret to me, in Mr. Walmesley's room, and mind that you say nothing at all to her about this."

Mrs. Walmesley went into her son's pleasant bedroom, and looked around her with a careful and observant eye. She reproached herself, and inwardly resolved to make a practice of going into it every day, to see that all was right. She did not wonder at his complaints. If he had been a woman he would have grumbled twice as loud. The bedclothes were not opened, as she had always insisted on, the carpet was unswept, there was a collection of flue under the bed, the dressing-table was disarranged and covered with black, the toilet service undusted and marked with black, the hair-brushes were unwashed. Everything wore exactly the look it ought not to have worn. Nothing was right.

Margaret came in, looking a little frightened.

"Margaret, you have been doing this room, I know," said Mrs. Walmesley, "and all I have to say is, that you are to help Jane in doing it; but you are never to do it without her. These are my positive orders, my child; and if any body in the house asks you to do anything I have ordered you not to do, you will always say I have told you not. I leave most things in the charge of the upper housemaid; but now and then I give an order myself. This is one of them. You will never come to do this room without Jane. Do you understand?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Margaret.

"And now I will show you all your faults," said her mistress, smiling. "Fetch the long-handled carpet-broom, and the dust-brush and pan, and your dusters, and a wrapper for the bed."

Margaret went, and soon returned with her hands full. She was becoming very quick and clever at her work.

"First, the bedclothes are to be all drawn off so," said her mistress, drawing them over the foot of the bed.

“Then you will throw the wrapper over all. Now take your dust-pan, and sweep the space under the bed. There must never be the least flue or dust under a bed. I would rather you left it in the drawing-room. Now move the things to one side, as I showed you in the drawing-room, and sweep the carpet thoroughly. First, open the window wide, and shut the room door. While you do that, I will go away; and when you have done it, leave the dust to settle, and take the cans down stairs for water. You can also empty the bath.”

Margaret was left to her operations, and Mrs. Walmesley went down to the kitchen to order dinner and look at the meat.

When this was done, Margaret was going slowly upstairs with the heavy water can, and her mistress found the bedroom swept, and fresh with the full draught of air. Then she sent for a light tub of water, and a scouring-flannel and cloths. With this the space under the bed and around the edges of the room were well washed with fresh water, till there was not a particle of dust to be seen. Then the basin, and jug, and washing-stand service were rubbed bright, and everything was carefully dusted. Margaret was shown how to clean the holes of the soap-drainer when they were stopped, because if this was not done, the soap would not dry, and became flabby and broke, besides the accumulation of dirty soap at the bottom. When everything had been rubbed dry and bright, and the dressing-table set out in perfect order, Margaret was sent down to empty the little tub, and bring it back filled with clean warm water, not too hot, and a good pinch of soda. With this Mrs. Walmesley showed her how to wash the hair-brushes and combs, making her observe that when the sodaed water was passed through

the brushes, they carried off every particle of grease and dust, and left them thoroughly clean.

By this time Jane came in, having waited for her red eyes to subside to nearly their natural colour, and the bed was made by her and Margaret. The mattrasses sadly wanted turning, but for this time it was laid as smooth and straight as hands could make it. And when everything was done, Margaret admired the result as much as she had admired the drawing-room after her first experiment upon it.

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#### CHAPTER IV.



First Margaret had been very much pleased with her new bonnet and cloak, and thought she looked very nice in them, when she was dressed to go to church, or to any house where her mistress sent her. It was a nice grey cloak, bound with pretty black braid, and a brown straw bonnet, trimmed with a good ribbon of the same colour, with blue bows in the front of her bonnet cap. Altogether she did look as neat and trim as possible, and every sensible person who met her thought so. But, unfortunately, the world is not made up of sensible people, and one fine Sunday—an unlucky day it was for Margaret—a cousin of the cook's came to pay her a visit, which made a revolution in all her ideas. The servants' dinner-bell had rung, and they were all assembled and

just going to say grace, when the area-bell rang a very sharp peal.

"Why, what can that be now?" exclaimed the cook. "Perhaps it is the milkman come earlier. Margaret, will you just look out and see?"

Margaret, who was always obliging, went to look, and came back, bringing in an astonishing vision, about as old as herself.

"What are you pleased to want?" asked the cook, in not a little surprise, and still more surprised to be greeted with a loud peal of affected laughter.

"Why, Agnes!" she exclaimed, "don't you know me?"

"Well, who is it?" said the puzzled cook. "It can't surely—— yes, it is Dolly, you child! Why, how fine you are grown!"

"Dora, if you please," replied the stranger, correcting her, with dignity. "Dora Hammond, her own self, and no other. Won't you ask me to have some dinner with you?"

"I will ask missis," said the cook; and she accordingly went out of the kitchen and upstairs.

"Dear me! I should never have thought the cook could not have given leave of herself!" said Miss Dora, pertly; "why, our cook at Bayswater always asks what company she likes!"

"That must be very good for your master's larder," said Jane drily.

"Oh! he is so rich, he does not care the least about those kind of things," said Dora, tossing her head. "We are quite above all vulgar considerations of money."

The cook here returned with her mistress's leave, and they all sat down to dinner. But Dora first

untied her bonnet—a white fancy straw, trimmed with light mauve ribbons, a green wreath and bunches of grapes—and took off her elegant light coat of braided cloth and ever so many buttons, and displayed her hair turned back over puffs, and fastened behind with a gold and coral comb. Her full mohair gown, trimmed with narrow velvet and more buttons, was worn over an immense hoop, and trailed behind her in the most approved style. Her open sleeves showed net ones underneath, edged with several rows of lace. She had bracelets of immense sham coral beads, and a velvet tie round her neck fastened with a bunch of lockets, and an enormous brooch fastened her collar in front. She was a pretty girl, with large blue eyes, very pink cheeks, and a quantity of light-brown hair. Altogether, so amazing a sight had never been seen in Mrs. Walmesley's house before, and Margaret might be excused for opening her eyes, and staring at her during the whole of dinner. She opened her ears too, and took in all the foolish, babbling talk that flowed like a shallow fountain of tainted water from this poor servant girl. First about the way in which they lived. She wondered Mrs. Walmesley could endure such a neighbourhood as this. *Nobody* lived in such a neighbourhood now. Then her mistress's carriages and servants. How could *they* live where no footman was kept, nor even a page? *Nobody* to talk to, to laugh with, to walk with, &c., &c. Then the wages, the dress, the particularity of such a mistress. How could mistresses in these days presume to order what their servants should wear, or make them look like guys on the 5th of November? Here she glanced expressively at Margaret, who thought of her banished crinoline at home, and who felt herself the

laughing-stock of this fine young lady. She had never thought of her hoop before, she had been too busy and too happy in her active work, and her desire to be a good servant and to please her mistress. Now every thing seemed changed, and she felt ready to cry with spite and vexation. The tempter had come and thrown all kinds of troubled, ambitious, vain thoughts into her mind, and all seemed confusion and darkness. She had not watched for them. She did not fight against them. She knew that these things were wrong, but she did not bravely reject them. If she had, all her troubles would have vanished.

The first thing that stopped Dora Hammond's babble was Jane's voice.

"Now, Margaret, if you have finished dinner, we will say grace, and you can help to clear away."

Even these words, to which she was quite accustomed, jarred upon her. It seemed so tiresome to interrupt a flaming account Dora was giving of the entertainment of learned monkeys at Cremorne. Jane's voice was a little sharp, perhaps, for she was vexed to see how Margaret was swallowing down Dora's tittle-tattle. Margaret got up slowly, more unwillingly than she ever had before. When the things were cleared away, she was told to put on her bonnet and cloak to go to the catechism, which was always at three o'clock, and which Mrs. Walmesley wished her still to attend. While she was doing this Margaret was terribly discomposed by a sound of tittering, and looking sharply round, she saw Dora looking at her and holding her pocket-handkerchief to her mouth.

"Why, you dear primitive little creature," she exclaimed, affectedly, "did you come out of Noah's ark,

and did Mrs. Noah make your clothes? Why I declare you are quite straight up and down like a yard of pump-water!"

"For shame, Dora!" exclaimed the cook, sharply; "if you come here you will please to behave properly. Margaret dresses just as missis wishes her to dress!"

"Well, I'm awfully glad she's not *my* mistress!" exclaimed Dora. "Why *no* wages should make a guy of me, or tie me up to apron-strings. But then I dare-say Margaret is ever so pious and good, and says lots of prayers, and thinks it wicked to wear crinolines and pretty gowns!"

"No, I don't!" cried Margaret, angrily. "I don't think anything so foolish, and I have got a beautiful *crinerline* at home! So now, Miss Dora, you had better hold your tongue!"

"There, now, I won't have quarrels and words in my kitchen!" exclaimed the cook. "Margaret, you had better go to church, if you please, and don't take up every word that is said, especially by a stranger. That's no manners at all."

Poor Margaret felt this very hard, and as if all the world was against her. She felt her heart swell with a hard, bitter feeling against everybody, and she went out to Catechism full of angry and ruffled thoughts. She was so full of these thoughts, and of the images Dora had called up in her imagination, that she answered very badly at the Catechism, and Mr. Clifford spoke sharply to her several times. So at last Margaret came to tears, and felt very unhappy and aggrieved. "Why am I to be always treated like a child?" was the next temptation. "I am as old as Dora, and as tall, and taller than she is. *She* is not sent to Catechism, nor

forced to do everybody's work, and made to dress like a charity child, as she says. She does no sewing at all, and reads all kinds of amusing books, and goes out to beautiful gardens and sights in the evening, dressed like a lady." The next thought slipped in so gently that Margaret scarcely heard its voice: "If I were dressed like Dora, I wonder if I should look as pretty as she does?" And then: "I wish I was Dora; how nice it would be!" Poor little foolish Margaret! Here were a host of enemies slipping into the castle of her mind, which she should have shut up and defended with all her strength at the first sight of them. And now they all were inside, and she had not made an effort to drive them out again. They were shooting thorns and pins, and needles, and daggers, and knives into her soul on all sides, and she never once held up her shield to guard herself, and turn the weapons aside. Poor little foolish Margaret, if you will not fight, you had better fly while you can!

When Margaret came home, she met Jane, who told her her mother was come, and Mrs Walmsley had sent her to sit down in the housekeeper's room to wait for her. She felt a rush of pleasure at seeing her mother, and kissed her again and again affectionately.

"Why, Margie dear, how well and healthy you look!" exclaimed Mrs. Foley, holding her at arm's length. "See here is little Ciss, come to look at her fine sister in service! Well, you do look nice in your Sunday things, to be sure!"

Margaret coloured up, and stooped to kiss little Cissy to hide her face. She was glad and sorry both at once.

"Mother," she said, "what have you done with my crinerline?"

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Foley. "Fancy that being the first thing you should ask for! Why its hanging up to be sure, just where you left it. What about it?"

"Why couldn't you bring it to me one day soon?" replied Margaret, a little falteringly; for she felt how silly and selfish her inquiry had been.

"Has your mistress given you leave to wear it then?" said her mother.

Margaret knew that if she said "No," the crinoline would remain hanging up at home, so she said cunningly, "Oh! she has no objection at all, mother; only when people are very careless about fires, and crush against the flowers, she gets vexed. She has no objection, as she said at first, to a reasonable crinerline—nothing out of the way."

"Well, I shan't be sorry to be rid of it," replied her mother, "so I will bring it the next time I come. How do you get on with your work? Is your mistress satisfied?"

Before to-day, Margaret would have given her mother a glowing description of her feats in the housemaid's line, but the poison she had been inhaling had so worked on her brain and ideas, that work seemed now the dullest thing in the world; and what she had before taken so much interest in, was tiresome to think of. But she said: "Yes, mother, I am getting on nicely with it, and help Jane all over the house."

"And do you go into the drawing-room too, Margie? That is a pretty room to be sure, with all them crinkum-crankums, and dishes, and china, about!"

"Oh! yes," replied Margaret, with a little superior air, borrowed from Dora. "Missis showed me how to do the drawing-room herself."

"Well, I never did!" exclaimed Mrs. Foley, much delighted. "Why Margie, dear, you ought to be the happiest girl in London, and the gratefulst I'm sure. By your looks, for certain, you are well off for eating. You look as well as well can be."

Poor foolish little Margaret! Yesterday, what unmixed pleasure these words would have given her! She would have answered with all her heart glowing with satisfaction and assent. To-day, there was a blight upon them. Every one had a separate sting. She had let vanity, and anger, and discontent, and envy, and covetous longing, pour into her mind, and the poison of her own passions and inclinations, *unresisted*, had begun to carry her on the downward road. It is easy to be good when all goes well, and the tempter is not at hand. Margaret had been *pious*, because she had been well brought up, and had a good and happy natural disposition. She liked her prayers and the services of religion, because other pleasures had been unknown. The church had been the scene of her happiest moments, because it had had no rival attraction. The High Mass, the Benediction, the decorated altar, the sparkling lights, the dreamy, subtle delight of the incense and the flowers—these all had been the Heaven of her little life, because no other glory or beauty had been presented to her eyes. Many go on upon the strength of this feeble staff through to their life's end. Many are kept from waking up out of the illusion, or from transgressing the boundaries of this straitened enclosure. In His unspeakable wisdom, in His mysterious designs—as He makes some to honour and some to dishonour—Almighty God allows some souls to pass on their way, as it were, fenced round with a hedge—neither seeing,

nor hearing, nor tasting the great evils of sin and the knowledge of sin, and following on the same narrow way of childish innocence to the grave.

But others, and most others, are thrown into the battle of life, and they must possess *virtue*, or perish. They must learn how to resist, how to lay up strength, and how to overcome.

Mrs. Foley talked for some time, till Margaret said she must go and get Mrs. Walmesley a cup of tea, and make herself ready for tea in the kitchen. Before she went, Margaret asked her, rather hesitatingly, what wages she was to get from her mistress, and when they were to be paid.

“ Well,” said Mrs. Foley, “ I am surprised at your asking that, Margie; for I should think your food and clothes, and being so well taught, was enough without wages. But your good mistress will make you a present, besides your clothes, at the end of the six months, if you give satisfaction. She has given you several pounds’ worth of things already, as you know. At the end of six months she will settle with me about regular wages. Why, what do you want now?”

Margaret felt a little vexed and put out. She was sorry to find her mother so reasonable and wise, and wished she had *taken her part*, and encroached on Mrs. Walmesley’s goodness so far as to demand wages at once. She thought of Dora’s fine flourishes about “rights,” and “these enlightened days,” and “the claims of labour,” and the “servants’ strike association,” on which she had dilated to show how masters and mistresses were now to give in, and their servants to dictate and reign. Why should her mother keep to such old-fashioned notions—“exploded,” Dora called

them—and persist in thinking her still a child? It was all part of the same “injustice.”

Poor foolish little Margaret! She forgot that these old-fashioned notions, which her mother remembered, were written down in an old-fashioned book, obeyed and enjoined by the ancient Church, loved and cherished by those old-fashioned people who walk in her “old paths” of order, discipline, and peace. She forgot that the voice of Him who abides in that Church for all time, to teach her all truth, had also said: “Children obey your parents,”—“servants be obedient.”\* “Christ became obedient for us unto death.”

“Mother,” she said, after a few moments’ thinking, during which she was playing with Cissy—“mother, I should like to have some money in my pocket for little things, like other people. Now and then one wants a shilling or two, and it is very awkward to have none at all.”

“Little things!” repeated her mother. “Why, you have your fill of food, and good food too; and good clothes, and plenty of them, and your washing, and your books, and good boots. You are too old to be wanting halfpence for sweet-stuff, I should think. What do you mean by ‘little things,’ child?”

Margaret hastily ran over in her mind collars, bracelets, velvets, buttons, and studs. How little her poor mother knew of the world, or of what people really did wear out in service! Pushed to extremity between her mother’s depths of ignorance and her own heights of knowledge, she could only rather doggedly repeat: “Well, mother, there are other things besides just those,

\* Ephesians, vi. Colossians, iii.

and I think I am old enough to know how to take care of my money."

The tone, perhaps, it was that struck Mrs. Foley's heart. She bent a keen look on her child. She said, in a pleading but firm voice: "Margaret, my child, as you love your dear soul, don't you run after dress and servants' nonsense. Don't despise your own good, and take up with folly. As sure as you live, Margie dear, if you do, you will bitterly repent it."

Never before had Margaret heard such words or such a solemn warning tone from her mother. The tears came into her eyes; Dora and her nonsense vanished out of sight; and as she put her arms round her mother's neck to kiss her, she said: "Never mind, mother, I was foolish. Don't think of it any more."

"May God in Heaven bless thee, love!" said her mother, pressing her to her heart. "Thou art my eldest one, Margie, and I have always prayed thou mayest be a comfort to thy father and me, and a help to the little ones. Mind thy prayers, and tell thy good mistress all that troubles thee and does thee harm."

At that moment Margaret heartily resolved to do so. She wiped the tears from her eyes, went upstairs to put away her things, and when she came down to the kitchen tea, she was again the old Margaret unspoilt. She joined in Jane's sensible remarks and dry humour about Dora and the modern style of servants; and even felt sure the cook was right in fearing such outrageous dressing and unnatural irreligious conduct would bring her to no good end. Much of what Jane and the cook said to one another she did not understand, but she knew that they were right in the principle which their mistress had instilled. Hatred of work, and love of pleasure,

and squandering the whole of one's wages upon unbecoming dress, could never make any girl a good servant, or keep her mind to her work. When tea was over, Margaret turned again with a good will to help to clear away; and when she was allowed to go with the cook to Benediction that evening, she really thought her mother was right, and that she ought to be the happiest and most grateful girl in London. But this was not *virtue*. It was *feeling and circumstances*.

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## CHAPTER V.



NE warm spring evening, some weeks afterwards, when Margaret was going out on an errand, and to take a note to the house of one of Mrs. Walmesley's friends, some one startled her by touching her on the shoulder as she was waiting to cross a crowded part of Oxford-street. She had stopped near a great millinery and mantle shop, and the person who touched her had come out of it, and a young man was with her. It was Dora.

"Well, little Red Riding Hood," she said, in her usual flippant, mocking voice, "have you been to sell the pot of butter for your grandmother? You look dreadfully afraid of the wolf."

"I don't think there is any wolf!" exclaimed Margaret, as usual, quickly put up.

Dora laughed a sneering, mocking laugh. "If there is no wolf, there is your grandmother. How is the dear, *very* good, *too* good old lady?"

"If you mean my mistress, she is not an old lady at all," replied Margaret, stoutly.

"Not? Why has not she a grown-up son?" inquired Dora. "Come, tell us, Margaret, what sort of a gentleman he is? Is he spooney and slow, like his dear mamma?"

"I don't know what you mean; you have no business to speak so!" exclaimed Margaret, angrily.

"You are quite right, my dear," struck in the young man who stood beside Dora; "she is a naughty girl to say the bad things she does. But upon my word, my dear, if she does it to show you off to advantage, she has gained her end. Your eyes are as bright as diamonds, my dear, and your cheeks are a most becoming peach-colour, to be sure—without paint!"

Margaret looked still more angrily at the speaker. The tone of his voice was very unpleasant; but when she met his eyes, they were much more unpleasant still. She dropped hers, half frightened and confused, and said to Dora that she must say good evening, and go on. Dora laughed, and held her fast.

"Now, little Red Riding Hood, what rubbish! You know there is no hurry. Can't you stop a moment and chat a bit with a friend, like every one else? Why I declare you are getting quite smart; you have got on a hoop this time."

Both Dora and the young man then laughed, and Margaret shrank from them.

"I must go—I must go, indeed!" she said, distressed; "I have a note to take to my mistress."

"Ah! I wish you had *my* mistress, Margaret," replied Dora, still holding her sleeve. "You don't know what a rise I have had since I saw you. No more tiresome service now, thank goodness. I have come now into Hawk and Handover's great mantle establishment, and I am reckoned one of the first hands, am I not, Mr. Sycamore."

The young man returned her bold, familiar look.

"Yes, Miss Hammond, one of the first hands for steadiness and hard work; quite the pattern lady for that department, I assure you, my dear" (to Margaret).

"Now, you shut up," exclaimed Dora, a little crossly, for she was vexed at his evident admiration for Margaret's dark eyes and sweet, modest face. "Come, Margaret, will you come with us or not; I can't stay shilly-shallying any longer?"

"I cannot go with you," replied Margaret, "I have other things to do."

"Quite the dignified, Walmsley style," exclaimed the mocking voice of Dora, again. "Upon my word, I think I shall come to you for manners. Well, now, look here; to give you good for evil, come into Morgan's, close by, and I'll treat you to an ice, and then you can be off as fast as you please."

Margaret hesitated; she thought it would be so rude to refuse a kind offer. It would not take up many minutes; it could not do anybody any harm: she forgot that it is the first little, trifling step towards evil that leads us on to ruin. She said—"You are very kind; I should like to come."

Dora nudged Mr. Sycamore's elbow, and they went on together. Margaret felt sorry then that she had said yes. She thought that she was going with Dora only.

We never do know what the first wrong step brings upon us. They turned into Morgan's large, flashy shop, already lit up with flaring gasses and coloured shades. A long row of gaily-dressed young women were serving a number of people, mostly young men of the counter-jumper class, moustached, studded, and ringed; and several parties like themselves—other girls, just come out of Hawk and Handover's, in knots of two and three, sitting at little round tables, eating ices, and drinking some coloured stuff out of tumblers.

"Come in here," said Dora, who seemed quite mistress of the occasion, and who led the way to the inner department, where the loudest talking and noisiest laughter was going on. They sat down at a little table, and Mr. Sycamore ordered ices, and something Margaret had never heard of, for three. Meanwhile he handed a plate of macaroons to the ladies, took off one glove, and twirled his false moustaches with an air.

Margaret was amused with watching the people's faces, liked the macaroons, and when the ice was brought, she liked that too, after the first surprise; but when Dora told her to drink what was in the tumbler beside her, she hesitated. Her mother had long taken the pledge with her husband, "to keep them both far out of harm's way," and Mrs. Walmesley had always warned her against giving in to spirits, or wine, or any such drink. In one of her familiar little *conferences* with her servants, which she generally gave them one evening in the week, to instruct them and draw out their minds, she had given them a short account of the effects of fermented drinks on the body and on the health, and how it flies into the brain and quickens the blood, without nourishing or doing any lasting good. She

tried always to give them *the reasons* for her orders and wishes, that they might be convinced, and might be able to convince others. She had laid before them, also, the temptations, both internal and outward, which the soul suffers from the use of such drinks. To some classes of life it is necessary to speak more plainly than to others; and Mrs. Walmsley knew that a certain amount of knowledge, even of evil, is absolutely required to keep many from sin and ruin; so Margaret knew very well that drinking wine and such things was unnecessary and foolish, and dangerous in her position in life. She put down the tumbler, and said she did not want anything to drink.

“Oh! what nonsense,” exclaimed Dora, impatiently. “The wolf is not watching you now. Don’t be such a baby, Margaret. Look at all those ladies, they are drinking the very same stuff. It’s absinthe. You don’t know how good it is. All the French people are so fond of it, and it’s quite the fashion. Come, taste it at least.”

“Besides, we are all going to drink together,” said Mr. Sycamore, insinuatingly. “It would be very rude, quite shocking, indeed, to refuse to drink with us. Now, Miss Margaret, look at Miss Hammond; she will take up her glass and bow to you, then to me, and drink; after our treating you, you must do the same.”

“Follow a fool in his folly.” The glasses were raised, and Margaret did the same; her companions bowed, and she bowed to them; they drained their glasses, and set them down; she drained hers; but being wholly unaccustomed to anything stronger than tea, she felt her breath going, her heart seemed to bound into her mouth, her head spun round, and she remembered nothing more.

## CHAPTER VI.



MARGARET waked up again with a curious sensation of being carried rapidly along. As she recovered more and more of her senses, she found herself in a cab, and opposite to her a gentleman. It was like a bad dream, and she cried out with fear. Then the gentleman spoke, and to her delight, and infinite relief, she knew his voice. It was Dr. Harley, who often came to her mistress' house, and who had spoken kindly to her many times.

"So you are in your right mind at last," he said, and he looked at her very sternly. No more kind words and smiles for her. "I should like to know what you have been doing this evening. I am afraid you are a very naughty girl."

Margaret covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears. All that had happened came back to her mind. The note! She had never delivered it. Was it lost? She felt in her pocket, and was glad to find that at least that misfortune had not happened to her; but she cried still more when she thought of her dear mistress, and all her kindness. The cab stopped at Mrs. Walmsley's door, and as soon as it was opened, Dr. Harley told Margaret to get out and go into the house. He paid the cabman, and went in himself, and told Jane to let Margaret sit in the dining-room, and to stay

with her, while he went upstairs to speak to her mistress.

It may easily be imagined what Margaret felt while he was gone. Her head ached so terribly that she could scarcely open her eyes, and she thought Mrs. Walmesley would send her home directly in disgrace. Her poor mother! Oh! how bitterly her words came back to her, and stabbed her through and through. "*Don't despise your own good, and take up with folly. As sure as you live, Margie dear, you will repent it.*" Bitterly, bitterly she was repenting it now. Had she lost her place, and her chance in life, for a few macaroons and a glass of horrible spirits! In a little while, the drawing-room bell rang; and when Jane came down, she told Margaret to take off her bonnet and cloak, and come upstairs with her. Poor Margaret trembled so much she could scarcely stand, and Jane pitied her and helped her. She smoothed her hair, and said: "Now, come, child, and be sure you tell the whole truth out at once."

Margaret never afterwards forgot the look of everything in the drawing-room that night when she went in. Mrs. Walmesley was sitting in a low arm-chair by the fire, with her reading-table and lamp beside her. She looked pale, and very grave. She had not been at all strong lately, and Dr. Harley had been attending her, and trying to make her better. He knew how much her life was worth to very many, both poor and rich. He was now standing on the rug before the fire, looking very grave and concerned. At the first sight of her mistress's pale, sweet face, Margaret burst into tears. She forgot all about her own fears, and felt only a great and intense sorrow for what she had done. She knelt

down on the carpet some little way from her mistress, and sobbed and cried as if her heart would break. But when Dr. Harley spoke, she checked her sobs, and tried to keep quiet, that she might hear what she said, and answer, if necessary.

"Who were those two people," he said quietly, and as Margaret thought, sternly, "who brought you out of Morgan's divan? A girl and a young man?"

"Please sir," she said, "the girl was a cousin of our cook's—Dora Hammond. Dora called the young man Mr. Sycamore. He is at Hawk and Handover's, where Dora is now."

"What were you doing at Morgan's with them?"

"Please, sir, I met them at Hawk and Handover's door. I was waiting to cross Oxford-street when they came out, and Dora, she spoke to me."

"Have you ever seen her here?"

"Yes, sir, that is how I knew her. She dined here twice, sir. I never saw the man before. They asked me to go out with them, and I said I could not—I was going on an errand for missis." Margaret's tears again flowed fast.

"When you said no, what happened?" said Dr. Harley, looking keenly at Margaret."

"Dora said it was all nonsense, sir, and some stuff about little Red Riding Hood and the wolf. She always called me Red Riding Hood. She said I should go and have an ice at least. I thought she meant with her, sir; and, after a bit, I said I would."

"Did you all three go to Morgan's, or did they take you anywhere else?"

"We went to Morgan's, sir, nowhere else. We had macaroons and ice, and some French stuff, which I

did not want to taste, but the young man said it would be rude if I did not; and I drank it, sir, and it made all the room go round. I don't remember anything more till I woke in the cab, and I was so frightened!"

"Drugged," said Dr. Harley, shortly. He then said, in French, to Mrs. Walmesley, that he had seen the pair hail a cab, as they were holding Margaret between them. He was happily walking down Oxford-street, from St. Martha's Home. What they had really intended could never be known, as they assured him they had picked up the child at Morgan's, and were going to send her home to Mrs. Walmesley's. He added, in the same language, that he thought her story was the true version.

"Did you think it *right* to go to Morgan's, Margaret," said Mrs. Walmesley, speaking for the first time.

"Oh! no, ma'm—no indeed I didn't! exclaimed Margaret. "I never was so unhappy! I was unhappy all the time! I was so sorry to see Dora—I knew she was not good company, and I never wanted to meet her again. But I was ashamed to say no to everything, when she seemed so kind. I knew I ought to say no, but I said yes. Oh! I am so sorry! I am so very sorry!" And poor little Margaret, now grown wiser, cried as if her heart was going to break.

"Now, then, you are not to cry any more," said Dr. Harley, and his voice sounded kinder to her ears. "You are not to make your good mistress unhappy first, and ill afterwards. Do you hear? You must tell her all about it quietly, and then I hope she will put you on bread and water for a week. If you keep company with such people as those again, the next thing will be to find you in prison."

He then shook hands with Mrs. Walmesley, told her to go to bed early, and went away.

The words that her dear mistress then spoke to Margaret, she never forgot to the end of her life. She showed her the frightful gulf she had been on the brink of; the whole consequences of what her fall might have been. She drew from her the temptations she had kept hidden, of vanity and discontent, after Dora's visits, and painted their results in their true colours. She showed her the difference between such girls as Dora and our Blessed Lady, who is the only model women ought to follow, and whom the Church always holds up to them as their guide. She pointed out to her how impossible it is to neglect prayer and examination of conscience, and *not to resist temptations as they arise*, and then to be able to overcome the tempter. She wrote down for Margaret, in a little book, one or two points to examine herself upon every night, and a very short prayer to use. And then she made her say her prayers with her, and sent her to bed.

What she wrote down was very simple:

“ 1. Have I given way to vain thoughts or wishes, about dress or my looks?

“ 2. Have I been discontented and thankless?

“ 3. Have I hidden any temptations without overcoming them?”

And the prayer was: “ Cleanse me, O God! from my secret faults!”

From that night, Margaret changed. She began to put away her childish wishes and ideas, and to strive in earnest to become a good and virtuous woman. She examined herself every night, and made use of her confessions to improve steadily. She remained with

Mrs. Walmesley some years; and when Jane married a highly respectable tradesman, quite unlike her former "follower," Margaret took her place. She then became a permanent resident at St. Martha's Home, and was the means of saving many girls from a foolish life, and from irreparable ruin.



## THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

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### CHAPTER I.



CAN'T say, Mrs. Pine; I wish I could. I never know when he may be home."

"Poor soul! What! he carries on just the old way, then: always at the Cock and Pin!"

"Just the same. But there's no need to speak of that. I only meant that I could not stop up this evening for the mangling, because of him maybe coming home. But I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll help you a piece this afternoon, while the children are at school. About half-past one you may expect me."

"That will do bravely for me, and thank you, Mrs. May."

"You're quite welcome, I'm sure. Good morning. Come, Mark, we must be going to school, my dear."

The sweet, pale, but cheerful-voiced young woman took her clean chubby boy by the hand, and went down the street towards the great school-house, which loomed like a vast factory above the roofs of the crowded thoroughfare. As she went she breathed a little sigh, but cut it short, and sent a little prayer after it. The sigh only was heard in the street, but the prayer was

written down, and came to light on one day when it was wanted. The school-doors were wide open, and the children were streaming in, dragging after them up the steps, and with a frightful tension of the arm-joints, small boys and small girls, together with bags, and bundles, and packages, and bottles, and slates, and books, and other such loose furniture—enough to have stored a good-sized emigrant ship. Mark May was also furnished with "coal and water" for the long voyage. He had slung over his fat shoulders a black imitation-leather bag, puffed out with a good hunch of bread and dripping, and a bottle of milk. He had also a book, out of which certain words had been learned by heart; but as he was still in the Infant School, he was unencumbered with more literary stores. Mrs. May carried him up the steps, at the top of which they encountered a Sister of Mercy.

"O mother, here is our Sister!" exclaimed Mark, clutching off his cap, and making a military salute, in the approved infant-school manner.

"Well, Mark," said Sister Mary Agnes, bending down to shake hands with him, "I am glad you are in such good time; here is your ticket for it. How do you do, Mrs. May?"

"Thank you, Sister; I am pretty fair. A little troubled, as usual."

"Ah!" said the kind-faced Sister, in a low voice; "cannot you get your husband to take the pledge yet?"

Mrs. May shook her head.

"Well, my dear friend, here is your cross," continued the Sister. "It is clearly the one God gives you, for you have not brought it on yourself. You

did not marry a man of any or no religion—he was well-behaved, and regular in his duties; you have never drawn him to drink by your tongue, or your waste, or by making his home uncomfortable. This trial is not of your making; so be sure it will work good to your soul, if only you pray and bear it with patience and love. I will ask Reverend Mother to let us all pray for you and for him."

"Thank you, Sister, and God-bless you a thousand times!" said Mrs. May.

She felt comforted. Blessed are those who stop on the way to bear the burthen of another, if it be only for a few minutes: they are carrying the cross of their Master, and so will He reckon it to them at the Last Day.

Mark was deposited in the lofty, cheerful Infant School. Mrs. May stopped for a few minutes to admire the wide, clean floor, studded with brass-headed nails in mysterious circles and lines, whereon the infants, like the stars on a celestial globe, traced their regular and intermittent evolutions to the amazement of many. She looked at the bright pictures on the walls, the animals of sunny and frozen climes, the gigantic vegetation of the tropics, and, above all, the representation of the life and miracles of our Blessed Lord. Then she stood in front of the gallery, and heard her own soldier-faced boy take a gallant part in the catechism going on. Among the rapid fire of questions and answers, Mark was up and down continually, his fat hand held out, his bright face full of intelligence, his answers clear, ringing, and generally right. Mrs. May felt grateful above measure for the good instruction given to her children, and for their spending the greater

part of the day in large, airy rooms, surrounded by kindness and watchful training; and then remembering, with regret, that there was a world without the school-walls, she nodded to Mark, curtsied respectfully to the Sisters, and went back to her home.

She took off her bonnet and shawl, hung them in their places, turned up her sleeves, and put on a large apron. Then she opened the back window, and looked into what had the appearance of a good-sized bird-cage, but which was in reality her safe. She had often found how unwholesome it was to keep odds and ends of food shut up in a close cupboard, in a room where several persons lived and breathed. Few things taint and spoil food so quickly as human breath; so she had thought and thought, and taken counsel of a valued friend, and bought a wire-safe. Seizing an occasion of sobriety and good humour in her husband, she had got him to hang this out of the back window, and found it the greatest assistance in keeping her little stores. Her soup-bones, her bit of put-by meat or vegetables, her pot of dripping, suet, or lard, her cup of milk, and her pan of bread, were all neatly ranged, safe from dust, from close air, and from the thieving cats. By this means Mrs. May saved *money, time, and shoe-leather*—three very important things. For many a bit of prime “cuttings” (the trimmings of the prime pieces)—many a sweet, good bone did she pick up at leisure, when she went on her little marketings, which she could not have carried home at odd times unless she had some airy place to keep them in. And in one round she bought several things, instead of being always on the run at a moments’ notice, and then being forced to take a bad or unsuitable thing, at a loss.

So Mrs. May soon saved the price of her safe over and over again.

She looked into it now, and took out a bowl of sheep's lights, which she chopped up and mixed with flour, and enough pepper and salt for seasoning. Then she peeped into a large pot beside the fire, to see if the bones had been boiled enough. No, they were not ready; so she put the lid on again, covered the mince with a plate, set it aside, and washed her hands. Then she drew some hot water into a bucket, took a cloth and brush, and a pinch of soda, and went into the other room. Here the beds were just as they had been left, only the clothes were all drawn off to the foot, and the window set wide open. It was a small room, but there was not the least taint of bad air in it. This was how it was arranged. The neighbours had many a laugh over "Mrs. May's Cabin;" but when they had laughed they were obliged to confess that it thoroughly answered the purpose, and that she was a wise woman. There was one iron bedstead, to hold two persons, for herself and her husband. Two hooks were run into the wall at the foot of this, and a line and curtain drawn across at night. This was always folded up during the day, and laid in the press. Beyond these, at the foot of the large bed, strong hooks were run into the walls across the room, so that a piece of webbing could be fastened from hook to hook, like a hammock, or a prison bed. A mattress was laid on this, and here Mark and his elder brother Fred slept. During the day the mattress and bedclothes were rolled, as in a barrack, or on board ship, and slung up to one of the wall-hooks. Two more such hooks were driven in the front room, and there the two little girls were stowed

at night. Their mattress and bedding was rolled and slung in the bedroom all day. By these simple arrangements many advantages were gained:—

*First*—The whole room was not cumbered up with great, awkward wooden bedsteads, *which always harbour and perpetuate vermin*.

*Secondly*—The many and serious dangers and evils of the whole family sleeping in one room were avoided. These evils need not be enlarged upon here. It is too well known that the gradual destruction of many souls, and the ruin of morality and all decency of life, are traceable to the wretched accommodation of the dwellings of the poor.

*Thirdly*—Instead of the dirty and tumbled bedding which must be the consequence of living with beds made in a sitting-room, where they are used as chairs, tables, and press, as the case may be, or beds doubled up and lying on the dirty floor, so that it cannot be swept or washed,—the beds were always clean and fresh; the roll was covered over with a coarse wrapper, as on board ship, and the bedding had thus the benefit of air and of being slung off the floor. Although the Mays lived in one of the dirtiest and most crowded parts of London, they had never vermin in their house.

To ensure and continue this comfort, Mrs. May was now going to scrub her bedroom floor. No vermin can stand repeated attacks of *soda-water*—it is not good for their health. Having no lumber lying about, and the space being free for her operations, Mrs. May had finished washing the room in a few minutes; she wrung out her cloth and brush, emptied and rinsed her bucket, and wiped her hands. Along one wall of her bedroom she had got her husband to put up a board with round

holes in it. When he was sober, he was a handy man, for he had been to sea, and, like most sailors, he could turn his hand to anything—from sewing on a button to neat carpentering jobs. Into this ledge was fixed a couple of good stout basins, and jugs to match, of galvanized zinc, which had been a present from the same friend who gave counsel about the safe. It is a pity that working people do not use their heads and their eyes a little more; if they did, they would pick up many useful hints, and have things more comfortable about them. If they used their heads, they would soon see that three or four broken basins in a year was a dead loss at the end of it; and if they used their eyes, they would find out these galvanized zinc or pottery iron ware, which would never break, and so be a good investment for their money. It is true that such basins and mugs require to be kept clean and dry, and they take a little more time to clean than pottery ware. But how much time do you waste every day, my good friends, sitting on your door-steps, or gossiping or sparring with your neighbours by that iron post, which you might better spend in making your homes clean and comfortable to live in? *It is a great point in life to be wise in little things.*

Mrs. May rinsed and rubbed her basins and jugs quite clean, and set them in order on the washing ledge. Under the basins ran a wooden rail, on which the towels were hung, and at the end was a deep pigeon-hole, divided in two, where the brushes and combs were kept. Mrs. May never let these get filthy and black, as too many do; she washed them at intervals in sodaed water, and left them to get dry and sweet in the air. Her children were never seen in the state so many

London children are found, with bead hair-nets outside, and dirt and vermin underneath. She was scrupulously careful to examine their heads, to wash them with strong soda ley, and to keep them well combed and brushed. Sometimes she took the three elder ones to the neighbouring public baths, where, for twopence, they had a good hot bath, with plenty of soap. In this way she kept their skins fresh and clean, and they were as healthy children as could anywhere be found. When the bedroom was done with, Mrs. May went back to the front room, and took another look into the simmering pot. It was going on all right; so she peeled and cut a few potatoes and carrots, and put them in next, and laid a shovel full of coke on the fire; then she swept the floor, and went round the corners and edges with a cloth, and dusted every bit of it. There was a dresser with drawers in it at one side, on which every plate, dish, jug, cup and saucer was neatly ranged, and as clean as possible. Such cooking utensils as she possessed were hung in part of it, and she knew where to put her hand on everything she had. In this her husband had taken a good part, as he was well trained in the method and order of a ship. Over the fire-place was a little wooden bracket, on which stood a plaster image of the Blessed Virgin and Child, and above this hung a crucifix, also of plaster, and a very nice one it was. On each side hung a sacred print or two, won by the children at school, or given to Mrs. May by some of her friends. There was the Sacred Heart, St. Joseph, the Workshop at Nazareth, and St. John taking Our Lady home from the sepulchre; these were all good-sized prints, and of a good sort, so that it was always a pleasure to look at them. Under the prints hung a piece of palm, a blessed candle, and a

rosary brought from Rome. All the whole family of the Mays set great store by this Roman rosary, blessed by the Pope.

Opposite the dresser, behind the door, was a row of pegs for hanging things on. There hung Mrs. May's common shawl and bonnet, a coat of her husband's, and when the children came home, they left there their school hats and capes; nothing was allowed to be littering about. In that house you never found, as you do in too many, Mrs. May with her clothes undone and hanging in rags, the table and chairs dancing the crazy hornpipe, and a cloth or two, a broken pan, and a bonnet lying on the floor; whatever time of day it was, early or late, *it was never the time to have things out of their places*. Of course the rooms had to be cleaned, the clothes had to be washed, and the things to be taken down and dusted; but you never found Mrs. May in rags, because she mended and patched every evening, or ran over clothing and pans on the floor. You never saw her wipe a plate with her petticoat, or use the milk pan to wash in. She never pawned her things on Monday, to take them out on Saturday evening; she had no pawn-tickets on her chimney-piece in a cup; her children were not eating pieces of bread and sweeties at all hours in the day; they never had pence and half-pence given them when they cried; she did not beat them violently, and then say, before their faces, that she did not know what to do with them, for she could not manage them at all; she never answered her husband when he was angry, or reproached him when he was not sober; she held her peace, put the children to bed, and prayed in silence with a cheerful face. It was certainly very hard work; it was a hard, straining,

anxious life, to be looking forward to the week's wages to cover little dues, to pay the rent, and to provide for the weekly wants, and then to be docked of one-third, which she knew had been swallowed at the Cock and Pin; but she knew, too, that loud talking, railing, and reproach, would not bring that money back, or turn her husband from his evil ways: why, then, should she soil her lips, and stain her soul, with words and feelings which she knew were wrong, and would never bring a blessing on their house? It was a hard life, and a ceaseless toil, but it was, as Sister Mary Agnes had said, the cross given by God Himself—she had not brought it on herself; and He would help her to carry it, and would carry the largest share: so she took it up day by day, and bore it on. This is the kind of woman Mrs. May was.

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## C H A P T E R I I.



HE minced meat was poured into the broth, and a good boil-up made it all straight. The door opened, and a man's heavy tread was heard. Mrs. May's hand shook a little as she poured out the contents of the pot into the dish, and some of the scalding liquor fell on her hand. 'The pain was intense, but she would not give in.

"Mother, what makes you look so white?" exclaimed Milly, the second girl. "Why you are all shaking. Have you burnt your hand?"

"Hush, dear!" said Ruth, the eldest. "Mother does not want such a noise over it."

"What are all of you brats hanging about the table for?" said a rough voice. "Come, get out of my way, or I'll kick you out of it!"

"Sit down, dears," said their mother. "Fred, take your father's hat, and hang it up. Now, Paul, I hope you're ready for dinner, for it smells very good."

It did indeed smell good, and May was ready enough for it, and felt rather mollified at the general aspect of things. However, he only signified his mind by a few half-grunting sounds, that might have been anything or nothing at all, and he began to eat his dinner, scarcely waiting to make the sign of the cross with his wife and children, to beg a blessing on the food. His hunger was nearly appeased before he saw his wife's wrapped-up hand and evident suffering.

"What's that?" he said. "Have you hurt yourself to-day?"

"Oh! it's only a little scald I got with the broth, as I was pouring it out," replied Mrs. May, smiling.

"Always two left hands, like all women!" said May, roughly. "Here, let us look at it!"

Mrs. May unfolded the handkerchief, and May saw that it was a bad scald. His manner changed, and he got up to pour some cold water into a basin for her to bathe it in.

"Thou hast work enough on hand, without that," he said; and he even bathed it for her for some time. Then he called Ruth to take his place.

"You are the best of the bunch," he said to the child, "so take care of your mother to-day."

Ruth, who was a delicate, slender, fair child, with

large hazel eyes, and who loved her father, through all his roughness, with intense devotion, coloured and smiled, and looked delighted at his notice. That great burly giant, with his long thick whiskers, and shaggy eye-brows, was a true hero in her eyes. She stood on tiptoe as he sat smoking his pipe, put her arms round his neck, and laid her little face close to his. The other children always held their breath when Ruth did this, for they held their father in the utmost awe, and wondered how she could be so bold. But there was no danger at this time. Drink had soured and irritated Paul May's temper, as it had swelled and inflamed his body. He was uncertain and testy—sometimes brutal and fierce; but he loved his wife, and he loved Ruth still; and if only this terrible habit could be given up now, he might become again the bright-tempered, active, kindly man he had once been. He had learned to take a great deal of spirits on board ship, and when he gave up that trade, and took to working in a machine factory, the great heat, and hard labour, and intense attention it required, led him to give loose to his appetite, and to drink more and more. Besides these reasons, there was another. *The other factory men did the same.* Paul May stood six feet four inches in his stockings. He was broad-shouldered and deep-chested, like a Devon bull. The strength of his huge, sinewy arms, from which the muscles started like coiled ropes, was a proverb in the factory. When he hit straight out from the shoulder, he could floor any of his fellow-workmen in an instant. It was currently reported that he had once felled an ox with a single blow to the ground. But when it came to real strength, to moral courage, to the endurance of ridicule and chaff, to the resistance

of persuasion, to standing against the laughter of the lowest and most foolish of his companions, Paul May was weaker than a child. His own little Ruth, whom he could have taken up and held in one hand, nay, his own baby Mark, could stand alone and resist temptation far better than he. And the reason was, because they had grace from God, which he had not. He had given up approaching the Sacraments, which are the means of strength, and prayer, which increases good will, and he was floating out further and further to sea, without making an effort to save himself from total wreck. Well was it for him that he had a "believing wife" and children, who prayed for him when he refused to pray for himself!

What is he thinking of as he sits there, like a colossal image, slowly inhaling and puffing out the smoke of his "fragrant weed," by courtesy so nicknamed? Do any thoughts of his creation, and preservation from hour to hour for a particular purpose, cross his heavy mind? Does he realize the enormous gifts of an undying soul? Is he planning any measures for cleansing, and strengthening, and raising that soul to a nearer likeness to God? Is he blessing and praising God for His own great glory, and for His priceless gifts to himself? Does any vision cross his path of One who loved him a thousand times more than he loves himself—One clothed in an old purple robe, with bound hands, and bleeding flesh, and thorny crown, looking on him with eyes full of Divine grief, pleading with him for his own soul? No. This is the most wonderful of all the wonders of our lives. The *facts* of life, the realities, the only certain and positive possessions are cast aside as if they did not exist, and men sit down to play with the leaf-shadows flicker-

ing on the grass. Here were these two, the husband and wife, bound together by closer ties than any but those which knit up body and soul; living side by side, belonging each to each for ever; and, while the wife lived in the Presence of God, and according to the beautiful expression of the Scriptures, "went in and out before Him," the husband had eyes that saw not, ears that refused to hear, a mind that he had himself made gross and dark by his own sins.

"Well, I must be going," he said, when the weed was become a stump, which he threw into the grate. "Letty, woman, hast thou a couple of shillings in the house?"

"Yes, Paul; but surely, surely, you have not spent all you kept back on Saturday night?"

"That's nothing to thee. Don't meddle and mess with my concerns; I thought thou hadst learnt that lesson at least. Dost thou want another so soon?" With a shower of oaths—"I'll give it thee, if so!"

Mrs. May went into her neat little bedroom, and came back with a florin. She put her hand on her husband's arm, and said to him: "Shall you be very late home to night, Paul?"

"I shall come when I'm ready," he replied, "and not before. All thou hast got to think about is that the supper is hot, and the brats got off to bed. It's quite enough for me to be slaving and slaving for thee all the week, without being tied up like a dog in a collar and chain!"—more oaths. Then, being a little mollified by the touch of the silver, as he took it from her he said:

"Now, go ahead Letty, little woman, and be sure to bathe thy hand!" He kissed Ruth and went out.

Some women would have vented their sorrow and

vexation in angry words and impatient railing. Many women would have "given up," and sat down on their beds to cry. Mrs. May was of neither sort; she did not like railing, and she never cried unless she really could not help it, and felt that it would do her good. Sometimes if we have a great deal to bear, and find it just a little too much, and the poor body and head, as well as the mind and heart, are racked,—a good cry is an excellent cure. It is better to cry than to let the camel's back break down. But for a long time Mrs. May had *prepared* for these daily scenes. It is a good old word that forewarned is forearmed, we are so very often *surprised* into anger and hot and evil words. So for a long time Mrs. May had got up early to put on her armour. She used to slip out with Fred and Ruth to an early Mass (she lived close to St. Peter's Church), and there she had laid down all her troubles and all her day's course at the foot of the cross, or more often, and which comes to the same thing, had placed them in the Sacred Heart of our Lord. There she put her husband, and her children, and herself. She made Jesus her friend and her guide, and she spoke familiarly to Him of every difficulty she had. Every morning, during a particular part of the Mass, she said: "O Lord, Thou knowest what this day will bring; I am blind, but Thou seest all things. Whatever it may be, sweet or bitter, do Thou help me through it, and do not let me stray from Thee. Keep my husband, keep my children, for I am foolish and weak. O Lord, help me, *for I am Thine.*"

This prayer had come into her mind, as it were, by itself; and in her simple, straightforward way, she used it continually, because, whether out of a book or in one,

she found it do her good. Indeed I cannot say that Mrs. May used any book much, but her missal for the Epistles and Gospels. When she read of the words and actions of our Lord, her whole heart seemed to go out towards Him, and to burn with the fire of love. She saw Him walking through the corn, standing by the lake, sitting down in the wretched houses of the outcast and bad; and there she followed Him, and placed herself like Mary, at His feet. Books and words seemed altogether needless. And thus her home-difficulties and her home-duties had gone a great way towards making Letty May a *saint*; had drawn her away from evil, shut out the world and its pleasures, overcome the devil, and strongly united her to God. The sanctification of her soul was solidly begun, and was worked out steadily by every day as it passed. And she trained her children in the same path. It is a great mistake to think that children are educated by blows, and shakings, and loud words. They may be frightened out of certain wrong actions, and forced into a few good ones *for a time*. But when the fright is over, nothing is gained except an angry and sore mind, and a determination to get what is wanted by underhand ways if by no other. *A frightened child, as a matter of course, becomes a liar.* Mrs. May educated her children by a system not to be found in any Blue Book or inspector's report. It was *by her own example*. Few words, but many deeds. She never railed back or answered her husband, so they never *sauced* their father or her. She never gossiped, or tattled, or "gushed" out about the hardships of her lot; so they learned to bear their father's harshness, and cuffs, and pushes, with brave silence. She made ready for him with silent honour

and service, so they were attentive and dutiful, and watched to supply his wants. She bore their tempers and little fretful childish ways with sweet firmness, so they learned to bear and forbear with each other. They never saw her idle, so their little hands were always busy. And, therefore, in the midst of many trials, Mrs. May possessed a continual source of happiness and consolation in her good and affectionate children.

She is washing little Mark's face now, preparatory to going to school. As soon as the soapy-water is cleared off his rosy mouth and fast-shut eyes, he looks up and smiles at her. "Mother, will Fred take me to-day?"

"Yes, dear, I think so. Do you know your spelling quite well?"

"Yes, mother; I know l-o-c-k lock, and c-o-c-k cock, and d-o-c-k dock, and f-r-o-c-k frock, but I don't know what k-n-o-c-k spells. It is a very hard word, that is!"

His mother smiled, and rapped with her knuckle on the washing-ledge.

"Oh! I know now!" exclaimed little Mark, triumphantly. "It is *knock!* k-n-o-c-k knock! I thought it was *crock*—like what you wash the plates in; but Milly said that was wrong. Mother, if I say it all right, I shall get a good mark, and that will make sixteen good marks. What shall I choose for them—a slate-pencil, or a medal, or a picture? Milly wants me to have a picture, and give it to her; but Fred says I want a slate-pencil most—which should *you* like best?"

"That is really so difficult to decide, dear," said Mrs. May, who was brushing his hair. "Suppose you draw lots, if you cannot settle it yourself. And Milly dear, you must not always want Mark to give you his things. Let him give them away if he likes, and I love him to

be so generous as he is, but do not *ask* for them. That is not good manners either."

Milly hung her little fair head and coloured, for she was inclined to be the despot of the home-circle. She was so charming and beautiful a child, that they all felt the fascination of her little wilful, imperious ways. But it was not good for her to be allowed to reign and exact as she was disposed to do, and a gentle word was now and then interposed by the queen-bee of the little hive.

"Oh! I should like to draw lots!" exclaimed Mark; "how shall we do it?"

"Here," said Fred, in his quiet, elderly fashion, slowly and methodically tearing three little bits of paper. "I will write 'medal,' 'picture,' and 'slate-pencil' on these, and whichever you draw, last or first, shall be the one."

"Oh, last!" cried Mark. "That will make it longer, and be more fun!"

The papers were written upon, folded, and drawn. "Slate-pencil" was on the last. "Well, I really want it very much," said Mark. "When I get some more marks, I will choose a picture for Milly. I like to give things away so much!"

His mother stooped and kissed the happy little face, and he was soon armed with his cap and bag, and despatched with Fred, singing, as he went out of the door, the old nursery rhyme :

" You go forward with bottle and bag,  
And I'll come after with little jack nag!"

The two little girls were then looked over and sent on their way, and the house was left free for Mrs. May's

ial cleaning and household operations. She was over that day than she had reckoned upon by two ills, but though a moment's pang went through her mind, looking forward to the evening, she offered it up in a short prayer, and went about her work with a thankful heart.

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## CHAPTER III.

THE storm which had been foreseen in the horizon, came down in the evening. Mrs. May had said night-prayers with the children, had heard their little hymns, and had stowed them all, even Fred, for the night. Foreseeing the state in which her husband would return, had housed them all in the inner room, intending to the two little girls into their own bed when all was over. She then got down her little book of Oratory hymns, opened it at her favourite, "Eternal Years," and began to repair some rents and tears in her children's songs, while every now and then she read over and recited by heart a verse of the beautiful hymn. She read it slowly through the words:—

"Bear gently, suffer like a child,  
Nor be ashamed of tears;  
Kiss the sweet Cross, and in thy heart  
Sing of the Eternal years."

It sweet music seemed to pour both oil and wine

into her heart. Those years of eternal happiness seemed to unfold before her like a map, and to show her, one after another, fresh thoughts of the love and mercy of God, fresh delights in Him, which no one could meddle with or spoil. Life shrank up into its briefest span of days; it went up like a curl of smoke floating on the air; and all its pains and miseries seemed to vanish with it, worthy only of a short thanksgiving, and then to be forgotten. Blessed was the thought, and blessed the mind, that imagined and wrote down that hymn to be a comfort to the sorrowing, and a help to many souls! Surely, he who did it, in the Eternal Years to come, will win from it and all his other hymns an ever-brightening crown.

But, nevertheless, the life-battle had to be fought through. Mrs. May was startled out of her dream of Heaven by loud voices and scuffling sounds outside the door. Then came a rude knocking, remonstrances, and peals of coarse laughter. Before she could undo the door, a volley of oaths from her husband. She breathed one prayer, and threw the door wide open. May wrenched himself clear of the hands that held him—the companions and tempters who had first helped to brutalize, and now were mocking him. But they did not laugh long. There was something in Mrs. May's face that stopped their mirth, half-drunken as it was. "Beg pardon, missis," said one of the men; "but we have brought your good man home. He was for sleeping in the streets, ma'am, which is contrary to the law of this free and enlightened —."

"—— Hold your jaw!" said the other. "Missis, your good man has taken enough to make him dangerous, and he was such a fool as not to take enough

to make him safe. I advise you to get him to bed; and if you could get him under the pump, too, it would be no bad thing." The speaker stopped suddenly, and ducked, for May had seized the poker, and, with a savage imprecation, flung it at him with all his force. If he had not slipped aside with the swiftness of a cat, he would never have left that house alive. Seeing his mood, the pair of comforters quickly slammed the door together, and fled. May could not be persuaded not to send after them a bowl and two dishes, which were shivered into a thousand fragments against the door.

Mrs. May begged and intreated of him to go to bed. His face was so ferocious, and his mood so unusual, even in the worst fits she had known, that she trembled for the children. She took off his coat and hat, and was going to unfasten his boots, when he broke into a torrent of oaths and bad language, pushed her roughly aside, and went staggering into the bedroom. Before she could stop him, he rushed to the bed and seized the two children. A loud wail of fright and terror burst from the poor little girls, startled out of their sleep. May laughed a drunken, savage, horrible laugh, and then chucked poor little Milly nearly across the room. Ruth, now fully awake, showed extraordinary nerve and self-possession. She clung to her father, calling him all kinds of endearing names, and held his hands. A half-conscious, singular expression crossed the man's face. He became quiet, and sat down on the bed. Poor little Milly, who was very much hurt by the violence of the fall, and whose head was bleeding, was carried by her mother into the front room. "Ruth," then said her drunken father, in a thick, hoarse voice—"Ruth, my bonny bird, I will kill them all but thee; and thou

and I and thy mother will go over the sea, and live far away from these horrible, grinning creatures!" A dreadful change came over his face. He pushed the child from him with horror. He tore at his arms as if to tear off some imaginary monsters—cried out as if in an agony of pain, and then fell back on the bed in all the horrors of *delirium tremens*.

Mrs. May put all the children to bed in the front room. She cleared a space and laid their mattresses on the floor, and whispered to them to say one "Hail, Mary!" for their father, and to go to sleep. Then she went to her raving, shuddering husband, then striving in a restless, never-ending fight with imaginary serpents, who, he said, were crawling over his bed and himself. She made him, as quickly as she could, a cup of very hot strong coffee, and got him to take it. As this was the first attack of *delirium tremens* May had had, it was not a very long one; and after an hour or two, at the end of which his pale, delicate wife was nearly fainting with fatigue, he fell into a heavy sleep, that sleep of drunkenness which she knew so well. Then, and then only, did she dare to relax her vigilant watch over the lives of her children, and to lie down beside him. She knew he was safe now for seven or eight hours.

Mrs. May forced herself up early in the morning, though every pulse was throbbing with fatigue and want of sleep. She dressed herself, and went out to the priest's house. She charged Fred and Ruth to give an eye to the younger ones, and to take care of the fire. She first took counsel of the parish priest, and then went on to St. Martha's Home. It had come into her mind that if Sister Lettice would speak to Paul herself, he would do more for her than any one else. She had

still farther to go after that. She had another friend whose help, in her husband's terrible state, she wished to seek. This good friend—the one who had counselled her wire-safe, and made her a present of her zinc basins—was Dr. Harley, and he lived some way off. It was well for her that Sister Alice had made her eat some bread and butter, and drink a bowl of tea, before she started. When she got to Dr. Harley's door she nearly fainted on the step. She steadied herself, however, by her strong will, and went in and sat down on the hall-bench till he came.

Mrs. Harley was just coming down the stairs to make breakfast, and the doctor's little terrier, Touzle, who knew Mrs. May, came pattering down with her, and began to jump and wag himself round her. "Who is it?" said Mrs. Harley. "Some one for the Doctor? Why, I declare it is Mrs. May! and oh! how ill you look! Come in here and wait for him."

"No, she will come into my study," said Doctor Harley, coming out of it, and speaking as short as you please. "You go and make her some tea, Minnie, and I will see what she wants. Well," he said, as the door shut, "it is about your husband I suppose? I hope he has fallen off the top of a house, or down the well!"

These consoling propositions almost made Mrs. May smile in spite of her trouble. "No, sir, not quite that; and I hope better things for him yet. But oh! sir, could you come and see him this morning? Very soon, sir, if you please. It would be so very kind of you."

"Kind! Fiddlesticks! What's the brute done to himself now?"

"Oh! please sir, don't! He had *delirium tremens*, sir,

last night. It is the first time. It was very dreadful, sir. I thought he would have killed poor little Milly!" Then, for the first time, all that had passed seemed to weigh with its full weight on Mrs. May. The over-tasked body gave way, and she burst into tears.

"There now; that's the best physic for you!" said Dr. Harley, who knew her well. But he went away into the dining-room, and poured out a glass of port wine, and put into it a few drops of something out of a little bottle, and brought it to her, and made her drink it all, and eat a small sandwich of beef and bread. And while she was doing this he took his own breakfast, or, as he said, "a synopsis and analysis of a breakfast," and ordered a cab. At which course of irregular proceedings, that wonderful little Mrs. Harley never said a word, nor showed a sign of displeasure; for the Doctor's will was her law, and he himself allowed that she was thoroughly broken in.

The cab quickly took Dr. Harley and Mrs. May back to her house, and they found the children up and dressed, the beds rolled and strapped up as neatly as possible, and the breakfast ready on the table. Fred and Ruth had played at master and mistress, and had done it well. May was just waking out of his sleep; and a fine figure he looked, with his face purple and blue, his eyes red and swelled, and his head aching so that he could not lift it up from the pillow. Dr. Harley stood at the foot of the bed, and looked down at him. No one in the world would have liked that look, or still less to have deserved it. "There is no need to ask if you are ashamed," he said; "I am afraid you are past being ashamed of anything. But I tell you what, my fine fellow, you are not going to play

these pranks any longer. I shall get your wife and children put under the protection of the magistrate before this day is out."

May muttered something; but he was cowed by the eagle look that was glancing down upon him—a look as fearless as it was keen and decided: "So I find you are not satisfied now with being a drunkard, but you want to be a murderer too."

May started and writhed. "Doctor! what do you mean?"

"I mean that it was only your wife's pluck and presence of mind, last night, that prevented you from killing your own child. Milly is bruised all over, and has a cut in her head, caused by your throwing her out of bed last night."

"Sir, I was drunk! I don't remember it the least! I give you my honour, sir ———"

"Pah! don't talk of honour to me. The honour of a beast! Drunk! yes, I'll be bound you were, and will be again! I tell you, you threw Milly across the room just like a bale of clothes, and you threatened to kill her and two more of the children. And you'll do it too, before many days are past, unless you are prevented; and I mean to prevent you. If you choose to lead the life of a beast yourself, I can't help it; but you shall not shorten the lives of your good wife and innocent children."

May groaned aloud. His head was splitting; his whole body seemed on the rack; but these short, earnest words cut open his heart and pierced his soul. Then, in the confusion of his mind, fresh horrors seemed to crowd upon him. He writhed and turned as if the bed were made of red-hot iron. He snatched at

imaginary monsters and loathsome reptiles on the coverlit, and shrieked aloud, throwing his knotted arms wildly in the air. "I am glad you called me," said Dr. Harley to Mrs. May, coolly; "your life would not have been safe for an hour. Can you or little Ruth keep him tolerably quiet for five minutes? If you cannot answer for it, run and fetch a neighbour to help you."

Mrs. May said she was not afraid. She called Ruth in quietly, and gave Fred in charge of little Mark, to get him away to school. Dr. Harley then went out, and returned before very long with two policemen and a cab. He went in to May and told him to get up and dress himself, and to let his wife help him as much as she could. In the course of time this was managed, and between his wife and the policemen he was safely got into the cab. Dr. Harley had already told Mrs. May that he was going to take him in to St. Matthew's Hospital, where proper measures and attendance would soon work a cure. He then told her to get herself and little Milly ready, and to go down to the police court, where he would meet her. They had not to wait very long; and after a clear, brief examination by the active magistrate, Mrs. May received the necessary protection for herself and her children. Dr. Harley gave her a few directions, said he should see Milly soon, and went his way.

## CHAPTER IV.



ND Mrs. May went hers, which was to her own house, to leave Milly with Ruth, and to see about dinner, which the thoughtful little girl had already prepared out of what she found in the safe. And she had the kettle boiling, and with a wise little motherly authority and care, very sweet to a mother's heart, made Mrs. May drink a nice cup of hot tea, and eat a mouthful of bread. This did her a great deal of good, for her head ached sadly, and gave her fresh strength to go down to the Home, and leave word with Sister Lettice where her husband was to be found. Fortunately, the Sister was not yet gone out, and she came and spoke to Mrs. May, and cheered her with good and kind words and counsel, and said she would go immediately to the hospital, and see if Paul was in a state to profit by anything she could say. She advised Mrs. May to keep away from him to-day, and let his irritation quite subside. It was best for him just now not to be reminded of home. And she herself and the children so much required a little rest, that it was better for them to take it to-day, and lay up strength for the coming time, when it might be more required,—Milly was quite enough to nurse for the present. Mrs. May knew that this advice was the very best she could have; and she was not like many foolish people, who acknowledge that the advice is good, and then go exactly the contrary way. She thanked the Sister, took the remedies

given her from the dispensary for Milly, and went back to her house. Her heart, to say the truth, was with Paul only. She longed, with a kind of sick longing, to be with him, to soothe him, to nurse him, to tell him how everything should be forgotten and forgiven a thousand times over, if only he would leave off drinking, and take the pledge as a promise against that horrible Cock and Pin. She thought back to the days when she first knew him, a fine, dashing, open-hearted sailor, the finest creature she had ever known. She thought of the fields in which they had walked near Southend, and the day that he first asked her to be his wife. She thought of the birth of their first child, and how proud he had looked when Ruth was first laid in his strong arms. Was it possible that all that happy life, which looked now like a beautiful dream, was come entirely to an end? Was this weary, weary heathen strife and wicked passion to possess him till he died? And after death—— No; it was too dreadful. She would not believe it. St. Monica prayed twenty years for her wicked son, and he became a saint at last. By the strong arm of prayer and faith, the believing wife, like the believing mother, should win her husband back to God. The great clock of a neighbouring parish church struck twelve. It was the signal in that house for the Angelus to be said. Mrs. May called the two little girls, and made them kneel down beside her. She told them in a few words that they were to pray for their father, and during this and the next few days, to offer up everything they did for him. And while she said with all her heart, "May it be done unto me according to Thy word!" Mrs. May felt that their prayers were gone up, and were heard.

And while these three were saying the Angelus on their knees, the little ones holding up their small doll-like hands, and fixing their clear eyes on the image of Blessed Mary, and the mother pouring out all her heart to God, thanking Him for the mystery of mysteries—His Incarnation,—Sister Lettice was sitting by Paul's bed in the hospital, and was speaking to him. He had always loved and respected her very much, and minded her more than any one in the world; and although he was in pain and very ill and weak, he saw her come to his bedside with more pleasure than anything had given him for this good while. They had been talking for a long time; and when the clock struck twelve, this is what the Sister was saying:—

“Paul, I remember long ago, when you first came from Southend, you were fonder of your wife than many husbands are after their marriage. You used to spend the evenings in working for her, and making your rooms neat and pretty, that she might have a pleasant home. I remember the cradle you made for Ruth as well as if it were yesterday.”

“Now do ye?” exclaimed Paul. “Well, now I mind your coming so well! You and Mr. Turvile; and the old gentleman, he was so pleased with my little altar and bracket. Yes, that was true about the cradle; and Ruth, she was the prettiest little quiet babe in the whole world. Leastways, I thought so, and I always have been main fond of Ruth. Whatever I be doing, if that little maid come and puts her hand on my shoulder, I bring it all to an end to take her upon my knees. Well, well, 'tis a longful time sin' we was at Southend. A pretty place too.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Sister Lettice. “And do you

remember the old gabled house covered with Virginia creeper, and the boathouse, and then along the shore, and the fields beyond the ropewalk?"

"The ropewalk!" exclaimed Paul. "Ah! well indeed may I mind the old ropewalk! It was in the first field beyond there I asked Letty to be my wife, and she did look so sweet and shy like, and yet so fearless in a way. Oh, but I would like to see Southend again once more!"

"Suppose you and your wife take a holiday, and go down there for a week," said Sister Lettice. "I will see that the children are looked after at the Home. You could go down on a Monday, and come back on the Saturday, and it would do you all the good in the world. If you were to take the pledge, Paul, and begin your life over again, you would find it a far better one."

"Ah! Sister, I hope it would. Sometimes I think I've gone too far to come back, and that makes me creep all over. I think God is tired of me. To be sure I've done everything to wear Him out. And then I go worse and worse, and drown all such thoughts, as fast as may be, in liquor. And then one and another comes chaffing, and I give in, because I don't feel to have the man's heart I used to have. Ah! Sister, its easy finding fault with working men on account of drink! Plain enough, they *ought not* to take it, being as how its a sin, and we don't *ought* none of us to commit sins, not for anything or anybody. But no one knows but them as is *there* what it is to be days and days and weeks with the same lot—chaffing, and swearing, and making game of everything good. What *ought* to be done goes clean out of a man's mind, as 'twere, and he begins to give in a bit at one time, and a bit at

another time; and then you see he's fast. The drink gets hold of him, and the good company, and the songs, and—well, there 'tis! He might as well go and chuck himself into the river at once."

"Paul, there is no way out of it but one," said the Sister, after a pause.

"What is that, Sister?"

"To keep fast hold of the means of grace; to keep to the Sacraments," she replied. "I don't think there is any other way. God's grace is surely no weaker than it used to be, and Satan no stronger. If you give up your prayers—I don't mean a mere *set of prayers*—but if you give up *asking God for help, and looking to Him* who alone can give it, and taking the means He has provided for strengthening our weakness, I don't see how you can ever stand. No pledge will keep you from drink, if there is not a grace continually given by higher means. But if, when you take the pledge, you will promise Almighty God to go regularly to confession and to Communion, when you are allowed, I am sure you could do well, and be saved from this dreadful sin. Will you think over this, and try and prepare for confession? I think Mr. Barrow or Mr. Clifford would help you very much."

"Father Clifford, Sister, I always did go to. He knows me well, and has helped me many a time. He is very kind, and speaks out plain too. I be main fond of Father Clifford."

"Well, I will ask him to come and see you," said she; "and then I want you to go out to Southend. A kind lady has left some money for me, for occasions when I think it may be useful, and I think it would be useful for you to take your wife for a little holiday.

She wants a holiday, and you certainly owe her one. I do hope, Paul, the first thing you do will be to learn to thank God for that wife of yours. Believe me, you do not often see such a one."

"And that is true," replied Paul, sighing deeply; "she is a main too good for me, and always was, when I was at the best of times. But if I live to get up, and get round, Sister, I will be a different man to what I have been."

The Sister saw that Paul was weak and very tired, so she left off talking, and read him part of the Passion from one of the Gospels, and a prayer for contrition; and then she bade him good-bye, and went away.

Late that afternoon, Mr. Clifford was sitting in the same place by Paul's bedside. No one heard what either of them said, but they were talking for some time; and when the priest got up to go, Paul held him a long while by the hand, and seemed as if he could not let him go. And he came every day for several days, and at the end of them Paul May had received absolution for the first time for three years and a-half.

## CHAPTER V.



MOTHER, what a beautiful place ! How I wish we lived here ! Oh ! look at the flowers, growing right up in the air ! Well, I never did know there were such big flower-bushes as those: did you, Ruth ?"

" Those are May-bushes, Milly," said Fred, much amused. He had been out in the country many times with his father and with his school, and his superior knowledge of things in general was often called into requisition in the small family. But even his philosophy was not proof against real sea, with ships sailing on it, and meadows and hedgerows sweet with blossom. There was a general rush, and the children collectively threw themselves on the cowslips, gathering frantically, as if they had all gone suddenly mad. Ruth was the first to recover from the sweet frenzy of fresh, blossoming, fragrant spring—that time which, while it arouses and strengthens every evil passion in the bad or unguarded, opens the heart of the innocent and good to bless and praise God in His gifts. Ruth soon came with her handful of cowslips, and stood again beside her mother.

" O mother, I am so glad to be with you again ! I am so glad you let us come down here to spend the afternoon, and go back home with you ;" and she clasped her mother's hand as if she could not let it go.

"I am sure you were very happy in the Home, dear; were you not?"

"Oh! yes, mother, and I have such lots of things to tell you about it. Do you know, Sister Elizabeth let us go with her to mix up physic in the dispensary, and I used sometimes to roll the pills. It was so funny to see them grow round. And there was such a beautiful great cat, and he catches all the mice. But *you* were not there, mother, and I wanted *you* very much. You will stay at home, mother, now—will you not?"

"Please God, yes," replied her mother; "but I do not know if we shall always live where we do now. We might come to live near here. Do you know your father is not going to work in that factory any more?"

"Yes, mother; Miss Turvile told me and Fred. She called us two into her room one day, when she had had a letter; and she said we were to go and say some prayers in the chapel, to thank God for His goodness. Father has got work in a better place, mother—hasn't he?"

"Yes, dear; he is to be foreman in Darrell's great steam flour-mill, out towards this side of London. O Ruth, you don't know what a load came off my heart when I heard this. I had been praying and praying, and you children, I'm sure, were praying as well as ever you could, and the Sisters at the Home, and the dear Nuns at Mark's school. May God reward them all and each one! And when the letter came, which I am very sure Dr. Harley had chiefly to do with—God bless him for ever! you might have knocked me down with it quite easy. And your dear father, he was so pleased, his face was all of a glow like, and he says: 'Letty,' he says, 'now do let us go to the chapel and get in through the Sacristy, and say the Litany, to return thanks to God.' And that is what

we did do, dear. I am sure it was said with thankful hearts, though we are both of us poor prayers."

Ruth kissed her mother's hand in silent joy. She did not know how to say what she thought—that there was no one who was so likely to have her prayers answered.

"But, dear me, we must not stay talking too long," exclaimed Mrs. May, whose glad heart was pouring itself out in secret thanks to God. "Look at those mad children, down far at the end of the meadow! And I must get tea ready for your father when he comes in; and we must not be long, lest we should be too late for the train."

Mrs. May called, and Ruth gave a better-voiced and more successful shout; and the obedient children heard, gave up their flower-extasies, and came running to know what was wanted. Their cheeks were crimson, their hats dangling at the backs of their heads, their hands double-crammed with cowslips, oxslips, orchises, and cuckoo-flower; whilst branches of May were dragged along the ground. They were not, however, at all sorry to hear of tea, as dinner had been done with before noon, and the expected journey had certainly reduced that meal to unusually short commons. They all began, in full union and sympathy, to talk together, walking backwards that they might better see their mother's face, and hear what she had to say.

In spite of this remarkable and crablike arrangement, they finally arrived safely at the cottage, without any further mishap than Milly's upsetting and tumbling over Mark, whose shoe came off in the struggle.

The fire of sticks was kindled, and burnt up brightly under the kettle; the plateful of dry toast was made, the bowl of fresh shell-fish, well roasted, was ready; and a fine

posy of cowslips, red-speckled and fragrant, stood in the middle of the table. The children looked at their mother, and looked at one another, the result of long habit, when a man's footstep was heard outside the door. Alas! how long had that footfall been associated with heartburnings of fear; with blows, with tears, with long hours of death-like suspense and dread! When the door opened, and their father's tall, burly form appeared, the long habit could not be shaken off; they cowered together, not knowing how they should be greeted. Only Ruth, dear and trusting little Ruth, sprang up at once, and threw herself into his arms. The others looked on; and when they saw their father's changed face of joy and relief, they too crowded round him, and looked up to be kissed and welcomed. Paul had too well marked the hush and fear that fell upon them at his entrance, and a bitter pang had seized his heart. His children were justly estranged from him. But when they came timidly round him, he could scarcely contain his joy. It seemed to him that every day now brought him fresh light, fresh helps to encourage him to persevere in a changed life. He had not known the treasures hid in his wife. He had not valued his children. He took Milly up in his arms.

“God bless thee, my Milly! Art thou quite well now, my child?”

“Oh! yes, father, quite well, only *this*,” she said, putting her hand into a long scar at the back of her head. Then colouring deeply, as Fred put his finger remindingly upon her hand, she added: “But it is well now, dada; it does not hurt at all, and we are so glad to come to Southend!”

“And where's my little Mark?” said Paul, deeply touched by the delicacy of the children, and holding out

the other arm for another armful. "Canst thou read yet, Mark, at that grand school of thine?"

"I can read the First Book all through," replied Mark, with that steady frankness which became him so well. "And I can write a—s, o—s, and g—s; and I can do addition sums without any carrying; and I can say eight hymns without being told."

"Canst thou, truly?" replied the north-country father, smiling broadly upon the brave, beautiful face, as he lifted it up to kiss. "Then very soon thou shalt help me to do the sums for the new mill; and I will take thee to see how the flour is ground."

"O father, thank you!" cried the delighted child. "Mother, do you hear that? And shall we go soon? Must I learn to carry first?"

"No, my bonny lad, I will carry *thee*," replied his father, smiling; and he looked at his wife, and saw the tears standing in her soft, steady eyes; but they were tears such as he had never caused before.

"Come," she said; "the tea is finely drawn, and we must not lose the train. Maybe we shall get a bit of a walk in the fields first."

They sat round the table, enjoying the level rays of the evening sun, and chatting and laughing with the innocent mirth of happy and thankful hearts. Paul was never tired of hearing his children's young bright talk, or of watching the difference in their characters, while their mother drew them out and gently restrained them at the same time. He looked from Ruth's gentle, grave face to Fred, so firm and wise; from Milly, with her beautiful and arch coquettish ways, and rich hair, to Mark, whose grand square face beamed with truthfulness and intelligence. What would have become of these

children, what would have been their lot, if they had been left to the tender mercies of their cruel drunkard father? Where would they have ended, if their mother had not been for them most truly "the Angel in the House," and shielded them from harm? His heart died within him, humbled into the very dust, as he recalled his treatment of them. His comings home to throw a shadow on their young lives—his hand uplifted against them—the punishments inflicted in the wantonness of mortal sin. And as he recalled he registered, over and over again, more earnestly, more prayerfully, his vow, that come what may, he would never again, by God's grace, touch spirits or cards to the end of his life. Fiery spirits and betting games had led him into the pit; and no matter whether he felt strength to be temperate or not, he would never risk the danger.

The tea was done—the things were all packed and stowed, even the great bunch of cowslips was taken—and the little party set out for the station, going a round-about way through the fields. About midway they came to a ropewalk. An old ropewalk it was, with its bleached enclosures, and its tottering posts, moss-grown and decayed. Ropes were made in other ways now, by machinery, and all kinds of improved processes. Aged men no longer walked slowly backwards and forwards, like deliberate Fates, spinning the threads of human lives. The monotonous hum of the old songs, once heard there, was hushed. The ropes made there by them had long since rotted; the old men were resting in their turf-covered graves. Nevertheless, Paul May and his wife stopped, and looked a long while down the old ropewalk, just as if they saw work going busily forward, as it had done in the years gone by. "Just the same!" said she,

pressing his arm. "Just the same!" he echoed, in a low voice, looking down at her. "I can see them now exactly as it was, and I shall see them, I hope, to the end of my life. This ropewalk has been a blessed place to me. Children," he said, raising his voice, and speaking in a solemn way, which they never forgot—"Children, I want you to know that I love this ropewalk dearly; and I want you to know the reason why. Years ago this is the place where I first met your mother, then a girl in service here in Southend. It was here, afterwards, that I asked her to be my wife, and that she promised me she would. And, my dear children, when, after years of bad conduct, and neglect of religion, God's grace was granted me again, to see how I had offended Him, and heartily to repent, it was in this same place that I took a vow, upon my knees, never to touch spirits or cards again as long as I live. And I firmly believe, that the grace of my conversion from a bad life came to my soul through the meekness, and the self-sacrifice, and the prayers of your dear mother, my wife. She has overcome evil with good—with her patience, with her silent sufferings, with her loving submission to an unworthy husband. And, therefore, she has won a glorious victory, —a victory over evil habits and sin, which is the only one that ought ever to be desired or tried for by a good wife."

## HOW DORA WENT INTO BUSINESS.

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### CHAPTER I.

T is sometimes necessary to get on by going backwards, and it is so in the present case. We know something of Dora Hammond already, as she was flaunting gaily at tea in Mrs. Walmesley's kitchen, and as she afterwards appeared, not in such flying colours, in Oxford-street. But we must now go back a few years, transporting ourselves by means of the only magic mirror left in the world, the Pen; and on one bright morning in May, we shall, by its means, open the door of a large girls' school, and go in. The school-house was in a very crowded and poor neighbourhood; it was of that order of architecture which may be called the Debased Oblique; and the room was low, full of cross-beams, and every-shaped windows. Nevertheless, that school-room was one of the very pleasantest and happiest places in London. It was a place where if any one once spent an hour, he would go again and spend another, and then another; and every succeeding one he spent there would be more full of interest, and surprise, and pleasure than the first. The desks were crowded with clean, intelligent girls,

every one of whom had on a white pinafore. This was a rule absolute, never allowing of those quibbles, exceptions, delays, and evasions so laudably practised in Her Majesty's courts of law; and the effect worked by it was of course the same, only done in a much pleasanter manner, as that operated in one of the said courts, which is, that the culprits were "whitewashed," and therefore, whatever might be the delinquencies, failures, and shortcomings of their interior apparel, the outside was fair and pleasant to view. It "needs not to say" how many orders, stars, medals, ribbons, and crosses were hung over the white pinnafores, for in this respect the wearers of the Victoria Cross and the Star of India, the Staff of the Legion of Honour, and the whole Chapter of the Garter, would have felt themselves, as our American cousins say, hopelessly "belittled," and put to utter shame.

It is taken for granted that to-day was some special occasion, for not only were the pinnafores whiter, and the stars more glittering than usual, but the maps and pictures, and even the beams of the roof and the gas-chandeliers, were decked with ornaments. Long chains of green leaves and paper flowers stretched across, and gave a festive appearance to the lowly room; so that, on going into it, we felt to have left the world outside, and to have given ourselves up to the matter in hand. Meanwhile the door kept opening and shutting at intervals; and as each entrance was greeted by the children with a round of applause, more or less prolonged according to their free judgment of the new comer, it was quite amusement enough for the time. Now a lady, nicely dressed, would walk in and sit down on one of the semicircle of Windsor chairs; now it was

the mistress, who vibrated between the school and the class-room; now a former pupil-teacher or scholar, and now a priest from another parish. These were received by universal standing and several rounds of applause. The mistress was always greeted with loud acclamation. The priests generally wandered down to play with the babies at the end of the room. Fat, roly-poly urchins of boys were there, and demure girl-babies, in blue and scarlet snoods, too "well brought-up" to riot and roll about like "the boys." Nothing could be prettier than this mass of baby-heads—curly, rippled, golden, and dark; their great long-lashed eyes opened to the widest extent; their rosy mouths also open with laughter, and a general excited sense that something pre-eminently grand and delightful was going on, and that they were part and parcel of the same. Certainly, if the ingenious vocal rendering of Tennyson's line in "Maude" was ever to be realized, here was a "garden of girls" to his heart's content. But once again the door opened, and the compact and serried mass of children sprang to their feet with a sound like a cannon-shot. And then for the clapping! not clapping simple, but all the children, bent down and doubled up, pounding on the desks, till the file-firing on a review day in the park was tame in comparison. Is it, then, our gracious Queen, or only both Houses of Parliament, or our own beloved and kindly prince, the Cardinal-Archbishop, come to grace this unknown occasion?—No. We see him mounting the platform; we recognize the genial, sagacious face; we are familiar with the spectacles and the snuff-box. It is the parish priest—our old friend, Mr. Barrow.

He lifts up his hand, and there is an instantaneous

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silence, as of death. He has not a loud voice, though it is clear and mellow, but we can hear every word he says. It is a simple oration, nothing flowery or "telling;" very much to the purpose, and short. He says they are all gathered together to read out in public the marks of approbation given to the school, the names of those who were classed, the Government grant afforded, and the more important private marks of the mistress of the school, and his own. He reminds them that the rewards now to be bestowed are all *deserved*, that there can be no cheating, or sham, or pretence about these, as there is so often in the praises and prizes of life in the great world. He points out to them that days like these are the consequence and the fruit of many others which they have known—days of cold, and weariness, and hard labour, during which they have plodded through the rain, and dirt, and snow, and darkness, to come punctually and dutifully to school, and to work with their whole strength when there. And so, he says, there will come another day of reward; we know not when; but as surely coming as to-morrow, when we shall all be ranged before our Judge, and there receive every man the reward of his works. And the same course, the same principle must be followed out there as it is here. The idle, the foolish, the neglecters of duty, the seekers of their own pleasure, those who shirk their work, or got others to do it for them, who play truant in this life, and spend their pence, and lie to their parents, will then come poorly off. But the true children, the faithful, the diligent, the obedient, will then, every one of them, receive their prize and their eternal crown.

Then he read out the marks and classes, and pro-

ceeded to give the prizes. One or two of the ladies, at his request, got up and went to the table in front of the platform, and brought up the prizes according to the tickets put upon them. And the girls came out of the desks, as they were called, one by one, and came up, blushing and sparkling, with a pretty modest delight, to receive, from their dear Father Barrow, the appointed prize. All the ladies in the land could not have given such value to the nicely-bound prayer-books, the images, the statuettes, the bundles of clothing, as was bestowed by the parish priest's rapid hand, his single nod, his quick, but earnest word to each—always ending with “God bless you, my child!”

The second of these prizes was won by a nice-looking girl, with a round, laughing face, clear, innocent blue eyes, with long brown lashes, and a thick coil of brown hair. “What a pretty child!” said one lady to another.

“Yes; how good and childlike she looks!”

“Too pretty, too soft,” said an experienced priest, who overheard them. “Poor child! if she could be always here it would be well; but when she goes out into the world—how then?”

“I am going to take her into my nursery,” said a third lady to him: a lady who had been greeted with immense acclamation by the school.

“I am glad of it; mind you keep a good eye upon her, and be very kind,” replied the priest.

The name was read out. The girl who had won the second prize was Dora Hammond.

Not long after this, Dora's aunt said she could not let her stay any longer at school. She must go to service. Then the lady who had spoken to the priest in

the school-room, and whose name was Mrs. Waylett, sent for her, and she went to be her little nursery-maid. So Dora started in life more fairly than most girls of her age.

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## CHAPTER II.



HE day was no longer spent in the regular, gentle, but most effective pressure of school-routine. Hitherto the clock itself had not been more punctual than Dora in getting up, dressing, saying her prayers, breakfasting, and putting up her school-dinner in the bag. Her aunt was a bustling, active, stirring woman of business, who kept a little shop. She did not want Dora to help her, she wanted her out of her way; and she was strict and unflinching in requiring of her the punctual attendance, the duly-appointed study, and the Government grant for school attendance. She had taken charge of her orphan-niece, feeling it to be necessary to do so, as otherwise she must have been brought up in the Union, which she did not choose; and the world, and the world's wife, still more, would talk and say things, which is the horse-power that chiefly moves a great many to action. Mrs. Smart did not choose that Mrs. Hart, and Mrs. Collins, and Mrs. Simmons, over the way, should say she was not able to do her part by her own family; so she brought up Dora Hammond, fed her, and housed her, and clothed her, and

sent her to school. But she must exact the capitation grant; and she did; and Dora knew that she must work to satisfy the inspector, and to be classed. Besides which, she could not let Julia, and Mary, and Kate, and Ellen get beyond her, or put her down. There would be then no Star of India or Victoria Cross to wear. Besides, again, Father Barrow would not praise her, and pat her on the head—and Dora dearly loved praise, and smiles, and kind words. She did not love her aunt, but she did love Father Barrow, as much perhaps as she loved anything besides herself. And then, again, it was the spirit of the school to work. Everybody worked there. It was catching. It was in the walls, and in the desks, and in the air. The whole army was possessed and ruled by the spirit of labour, busy, bright, cheerful labour, which flowed down from Mr. Barrow into Miss Stephens, the mistress, and from Miss Stephens into the pupil-teachers, and from the pupil-teachers into the children. This sort of thing is called by a particular Greek name at Oxford and other grand places, where they talk, and, I suppose, where they think Greek; but the name does not so much matter as the thing. Any one who has to govern or influence others, ought to be able to put this thing into them, and to be sure that it is the right sort, otherwise it does as much harm as possible. Mr. Barrow had the secret. He could put it into any number of people, grown-up or children—especially children. And his was the right sort, and did a great deal of good. Dora, therefore, was magnetized, and worked with the rest.

But now it was a different case. There was no routine, or regularity of hours, or fixed programme of employments, or mechanical drill. She was called up

early in the day, and earlier still if the children were troublesome, and could not sleep. She was sent hither and thither at the nurse's bidding, and sometimes more than was just. Miss Stephens had her day laid out, and did not require extra work to be done. And besides this, Miss Stephens was a *trained person*. I do not mean by this that she fulfilled all kinds of impossible requirements, or combined an amount of fabulous qualifications, proper only to educational Blue-books and reports. Possibly she may have done this too, as it is said that there was generally, at every inspection, a special notice of her laid up for posterity in those invaluable records; but I mean that she was trained to control her feelings and words, and to regulate them by just and fixed rules. Mr. Barrow had guided and formed her with great pains, and according to intelligent and reasonable principles, added to excellent religious instruction. No one but a man can do this as he had done it, and the results of masculine handiwork were excellent. No one had done any such good office for Stanning, Mrs. Waylett's nurse. She was a good Catholic, a kind, well-meaning woman in her way; but uneducated and *untrained*. She had gone out to service early, and had fought her way as servants do—learning how she could. It is a very extraordinary delusion, and one never to be explained, that while bakers, and joiners, and confectioners, and mantua-makers, are all obliged to be apprenticed, and to *learn their trade*, servants are supposed to learn theirs by particular inspiration, and just as it happens. It seems to be imagined that delicate house-work, good management, waiting, cleaning glass and plate thoroughly, and so as not to spoil them, and every kind of superior domestic service, are to be gained without the

least instruction, instinctively, or by trying, as young birds learn to fly, or puppies to swim. This was certainly the plan adopted by Mr. Squeers, at Dotheboy's Hall, where the pupils were supposed to learn spelling by doing the action; but the principle has never been universally adopted by the trades. Stanning must have been impregnated with a tincture of Mr. Squeers' opinions; for she always told Dora to do the thing required, without showing her how, and was invariably surprised when she did it wrongly, or not so well as she did it herself.

"Ah!" she would say, sighing reflectively, "girls are different to what they were in my day!" Sometimes she would get up impatiently, and say it saved her a great deal of time and trouble to do it herself; and she did it. It never seemed to occur to her, that it would spare her a great deal more time and trouble if she showed Dora how to do what she wished, and then make her repeat it before her. She did not see, as Miss Stephens had been taught to see, that you must first put something *into* a pupil, if you expect to get it *out* again. What Stanning did put into Dora was a great store of scolding and vexed, impatient words; and the crop she got out of the soil, thus carefully sowed, was irritation, discontent, and pert words. Then Dora was vexed and irritated with the children also, and her mistress was annoyed at her strong and increasing love of dress, and spoke to her about it. And Dora was huffed and uncomfortable, and began to revolve in her mind the pert, stereotyped answer of modern servants to their mistresses: "*If I cannot give satisfaction, I had better leave.*" Was it possible she could thus think or speak to Mrs. Waylett, who had taught her to work at school,

and was always so kind to her? And, on the other hand, was it not her duty to "give satisfaction," or try to "better herself"? Meanwhile, Dora's days were spent very uncomfortably; and one morning matters came to a crisis in this manner. She was waked by the violent ring of a hand-bell, and starting up she heard Stanning exclaim in a loud voice:

"Dora! Dora! Master Henry is crying! Do get up and attend to him!"

Dora murmured, and wished Master Henry was not so tiresome, and thought Stanning might have got up herself. She got up slowly, and several times Stanning cried out angrily to hurry her movements, which only tended to make Dora dress herself more slowly. At last she was dressed, and went to the side of the child's cot, and took him up and shook him a little, and bid him lie down and go to sleep, like a good boy. But Henry, having been in bed for eleven hours, began to feel that one may have too much even of a good thing, and he vigorously declined to sleep any more. Dora was obliged to promise him she would dress him when the fire was lit. It so happened that the wood and coals were not forthcoming, and Dora found that the under-housemaid had forgotten to look if the wood was used up. Grumbling again that she had to supply somebody else's deficiencies, Dora went downstairs with the coal-scuttle, and had to fill and bring it up again herself. Then she made the fire, and swept the day-nursery, and put it to rights, and set the nursery breakfast-things on the table. By this time, Henry had begun to clamour most loudly to be taken up; and when Dora returned to the sleeping nursery, Stanning scolded her sharply for not having come before. This

was hard, for she had had to do some one else's work, and, therefore, of course, was delayed in her own. But are we not all obliged to bear injustice of some kind, continually? Dora forgot this, and she forgot that Stanning had never been "trained," or put into a Blue-book; she forgot Mr. Barrow's last warning; worst of all, she forgot herself. Angry tears filled her eyes, and she said very impatiently:

"Well, and how could I come any quicker, when Jane forgot the coals and wood, and I have had to *trapes* down into the area for them! I'm sure I'm always found fault with for nothing, and I *will not* stand it! It's *very hard!*"

Stanning sat up in bed, and looked a great many knives and pairs of scissors, as well as quite natural astonishment, at Dora.

"Anyhow you can hold your tongue, if you please," she exclaimed at length, "you little impudent monkey you! I shall tell missis of you, you may be sure! This comes of taking girls out of a Poor school!"

This was not exactly the meek and quiet answer to turn away anger; but you see nobody had pointed out these things to Stanning. She managed how she could, and said what came uppermost; and she had been worn and disturbed by the baby, and her nerves were tried. And when women are astonished or frightened, they are generally several degrees more cross. Her allusion to the Poor school made Dora furious. She took up Henry, biting her lips to keep down her wrath, and as soon as she could, marched him into the next room to have his bath. All breakfast-time Stanning sat in angry silence, under a false idea that this was "dignified," and the

way to keep up her position as head-nurse. If she had been a trained servant, in the true sense of the word, she would have spoken sensibly and kindly to Dora, and shown her her fault, taking care to find out whether what she said before was true or not. But now she was heaping coals on the fire, and adding to all Dora's difficulties. She was a girl who would have burst into tears and acknowledged a fault with all her heart, that was kindly pointed out; but if treated with injustice, she was like Queen Katherine in Shakspeare's Henry VIII.—all her tears changed to sparks of fire. As soon as breakfast was over, Stanning marched off to her mistress with the baby in her arms, and soon returning, told Dora to go to Mrs. Waylett in the dining-room. Dora found Mrs. Waylett and the eldest boy at the breakfast-table. He went every day to a neighbouring college, and was just starting off to go. As soon as he was out of the room, Mrs. Waylett said: "Dora, I am very sorry to find that you cannot govern your tongue. I thought, by taking one of Father Barrow's best scholars, there was every chance of getting a servant who was above the usual miserable habits of uneducated girls. You know that Stanning is my head-nurse, and you ought to obey and consult her as your mother. You must not give pert, angry answers to the servant who is placed over you. I should wish you to beg her pardon, and say you are sorry."

Dora hung her head. This seemed very hard indeed. She had hoped that her mistress would, at least, inquire into the particulars of the case, and sympathise a little with her. This would have brought her whole heart into the matter, and she would have made any act of submission that was required. But her mistress seemed

to lay all the blame on her, which seemed the hardest of all. Of course she had believed all that Stanning said, and did not care to ask for the other side of the story. And Dora was right in thinking this would have been the best way. If it had been in Mrs. Walmesley's house, she would have done so. But every lady was not Mrs. Walmesley, and every girl could not have her for a mistress either. And then Dora forgot some other things again, and her heart felt to swell up and become like a great ball, and a lump came into her throat, and she said, in a thick husky voice:

"Please, ma'am, I am very unhappy! I wish to leave!"

Mrs. Walmesley would soon have got to the bottom of this wonderful proposition, and have found that it was utterly worthless, and made Dora see it too; but Mrs. Waylett was a more superficial and commonplace character, and she felt hurt, and stiff, and unfortunately did not take time to consider. She said:

"Very well, Dora; you are an ungrateful girl, I fear, and I do not think I can do you any good. You had better go, certainly."

Ah! what would become of us if Almighty God took us always at our own word, and condemned us to keep it? How many are there of us who have not, at some time or other, said to Him, virtually: "I am very unhappy in your service, and I should like to go and take wages under Satan"! If He had then said to us: "Go; you are very ungrateful, and you shall never come back,"—where should we have been? But so it is; and every day we see more plainly that the simplest and clearest of all the maxims of the Gospel, is as far off from our daily practice as the north pole from the south. "Do as you would be done by."

## CHAPTER III.



O now Dora was "out of place," and had to go back to her aunt, who was very angry, and very much "put about," and not at all pleasant. Girls soon find that to be "out of place" is very disagreeable indeed. The relations who were kind to them before, when they were going to a place, now feel that they cannot offer a home to them at every turn of the tide. Once gone, they must make their own way; if they cannot keep their places, they must provide friends for themselves. Dora was obliged to bustle about, and mind the shop, and *not* mind the smell of the herrings and haddocks, which seemed to be before her all day, curling up their red and yellow sides like Chinese shoes, and to pursue her even at night, with that peculiar penetrating odour which she had always disliked so much, and now more than ever. For girls become more sensitive and delicate in gentlemen's houses, where there are no bad smells, or close rooms, or anything approaching to dirt; and Dora seemed naturally inclined to anything that was delicate and refined. Unfortunately she was so. Unfortunately in Dora's case, for instead of raising her above mischief, and the occasion of evil, it brought her into it. She was very pretty; she spoke well; she liked dress; and when dressed she was very attractive. When Dora passed backwards and forwards through the

neighbouring streets on errands, and heard people say she was a pretty girl, she tossed her little head, and liked it very much. As she had left Mrs. Waylett, she was afraid to go to Mr. Barrow, and did not like to go make acquaintance with any strange priest; so she stayed away from confession altogether. This early step on the downward road, is one that leads to a great many others. Grace was being sensibly weakened in Dora now, and all the natural passions and inclinations were rising up to greater growth and strength; though, as she did not examine her conscience or confess her sins, she did not know the least what was passing within her soul. She left off some of her prayers, too: first, the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; and then the Litany of Our Lady, because it took too much time. So she scurried through the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "I believe," and "I confess," and then thought no more about Almighty God, till at night she said the same short prayers again. And sometimes, if the day had been a very heavy one, and many customers had tired her out, she got into bed and fell asleep before she had finished saying the Lord's Prayer.

Things were in this unsatisfactory state, when one evening, later than usual, the shop was shut, the curled-up haddock and herrings and blocks of bacon disappeared from sight, and Dora went down the street to breathe a little air. She put her little hat and feather anyhow on one side of her head, and a light jacket over her shoulders. Her cheeks were flushed with the last clearing-away, and her large, childlike blue eyes were softened by her fatigue. She certainly looked very pretty; and if her mother had been alive, she would have drawn her to her side, caressed and cherished her, and

guarded her carefully against every evil influence of the world. At the end of the street stood a flaunting, gaily-dressed girl, and a young man, in close conversation. As Dora passed them, the man lifted his hat, saying aloud: "What a *lovely* creature! A fairy, I should think, or a *syren*!" The girl who was with him burst into a loud laugh; and as Dora, really confused, was stepping off the pavement, out of their way, she caught her by the coat, and said: "I suppose you live somewhere, though you *are* a fairy. Where do you hang out? Have you got a name?" Dora hesitated. Then the young man said in a more subdued tone: "My dear Bella, you quite frighten the young lady. Do not mind her, Miss; but favour *me* with your name and address. Perhaps your mamma will allow me to call?"

"I live with my aunt, sir," replied Dora, thinking it would be rude not to answer. "I live with Mrs. Holland, No. 6, Soho-street, close by."

"That is very fortunate," said the young man, "for perhaps we shall see something of you. Miss Compton lives with *her* aunt, too, near here—a remarkable coincidence of circumstances, as you see; and Mrs. Compton is a very kind, delightful lady, who is always glad to see young ladies, and welcome them to her house. I assure you, she gives charming parties. If Miss Compton calls upon Mrs. Holland—"

Dora turned to look again at the promised visitor. She thought her aunt would be amazed at so much finery coming into the shop. Indeed, the crinoline certainly could *not* come in, and would have to remain outside the door, waiting for the lady to come back again. Over the crinoline, and looped-up, many-buttoned, and much-braided dress, was a black braided jacket, with gold

buttons and cord, and on the top of all a jaunty little hat, with an immense grebe on one side of it. The face under the hat was very highly coloured, and Dora thought very pretty, though bold. It was a very amused face also, just now.

"Shall I come, dear?" said Miss Compton, who was inwardly tittering at the idea.

Dora hesitated and coloured.

"Shall you come just as you are now?" she asked.

"Oh! dear, I see!" exclaimed Miss Compton. "My little pet, is your aunt serious?"

"I don't understand, ma'am," replied Dora.

"Is your aunt over-religious—a Methodist—anything of that sort?"

"Oh! no, ma'am; she is a Catholic," replied Dora.

"Ah!—h—h!" exclaimed Miss Compton, "you don't mean to say she really is a Catholic! Why there seems nothing else here about. Are you one, too?"

"Yes," replied Dora, wondering at the question.

"Well, my dear, I'll come *once*," said Miss Compton; "and then if your aunt and me don't cotton, why, you know, I can hook it again!"

Both she and the young man with her, who had been improving the time by staring at Dora, seemed to think this a most witty solution of the question; and having shaken hands, and again made sure of the address of Dora's aunt, they went off tittering down the street. Very soon, however, they seemed to change their minds, for after some discussion, they turned round and again came up with Dora, who was walking slowly in the same direction, thinking of Miss Compton's jacket, and wishing she had one like it.

"My dear," said that person, "Mr. Sleek thinks you

would like to see the entertainment at Negri's saloon. Have you ever been there?"

"Oh! no, ma'am; I have not been anywhere. Aunt would not let me."

"I don't think your aunt would mind your going *with me*," said Miss Compton, with an air of dignified protection, quite imposing to witness; "and Mr. Sleek is so very obliging as to treat us, which makes me think it would be rude to refuse. So come along with us, it will not take more than half-an-hour."

Dora felt confused, doubtful, desirous, flattered, and *weak*. If she had been honestly and simply determined to do what was right, and avoid all occasions of evil, she would have said she was much obliged, but she did not think it well to go without her aunt's leave. But her vanity was flattered by Mr. Sleek's evident admiration, and her principles were weakened by a growing love of pleasure: she blushed, said it was "very kind," and soon found herself taking Mr. Sleek's arm, and walking in the direction of a neighbouring square. Negri's house was brilliantly lit, sounds of music and laughter poured from it, and men and women were passing in and out, dressed in the height of the fashion. Happily Dora did not know to what class they chiefly belonged, though she felt their bold, dashing, off-hand way of passing their remarks on her. She heard one girl say to another: "Bella has hooked a new fish!" And the other replied: "Hush! she is not landed yet!"

Something in the tone of these words made Dora feel afraid, and she asked Miss Compton to let her go home.

"Home? Why, you silly child, we are only just come! Here, Gus, get her some ice and cakes, or something; and

do bring me some *absinthe*—it's so hot! And we'll sit here till the music begins."

Mr. Sleek went off obediently, and Dora felt it would be rude to go till he returned. Then she eat her vanille ice, and thought nothing on earth could ever be so good. And Miss Compton made her drink a small glass of hot, sweet stuff, fiery and scented, which made her head swim for the time, and then feel in high spirits. She began to talk however, and laugh; and when her companions began to talk slang and chaff, Dora chaffed in return, and forgot her wish to go home. Then music began to play, a beautiful full band, and some little children danced on a slack-rope, and performed all sorts of pretty tricks. And then a wonderfully-dressed lady and gentleman danced a fancy dance, which Dora did not like so much; but as everybody else applauded the performance loudly, she supposed it must be very fine. But Miss Compton began to behave so oddly, and drank so much "cocktail" through a straw, that Dora got frightened again, and entreated to be allowed to go home. Miss Compton was angry at this, but Mr. Sleek took her part, and declared that Dora should go when she liked; so that the two were as nearly as possible quarrelling over the point, when Miss Compton suddenly gave way, and they all went out of the hall together. They took Dora to her aunt's door, and with much hand-shaking and sweet words, they bade her good night.

It was a bad thing for her that her aunt was not come home, and that she thus escaped all questioning, and went quietly to bed.

## CHAPTER IV.



ONTRARY to Dora's doubting fears, Miss Compton did come the very next day, and call upon her aunt. Not this time in her gold-embroidered jacket and flounced muslin, but in a black silk dress and elegant shawl, very quiet and becoming. In short, she was so changed, that when Dora answered the door, she did not recognise the visitor, which amused Miss Compton exceedingly, and she called Dora "a darling, dear little green-horn." She was closeted some time with Dora's aunt, and then Dora was called in to bring tea, and to hear the result of the conversation. This was, that Miss Compton had been for some time in Shark and Grindwell's extensive outfitting establishment, in New Oxford-street, and she had promised to make an application to the forewoman for Dora. She drew a flaming picture of the advantages of the house, the large rooms, the fine ventilation, the excellent food, the time allowed for amusement and rest, and the high recommendations of the "young ladies" who worked there; their dress, their manners, and their conversation fitted them to shine in a court; and it was only wonderful that some of them had not been secured for posts in the royal household. The question was, whether Dora would have the slightest chance of being admitted into so brilliant a circle; but, after the modest doubts and queries of her aunt had been disposed of by Miss

Compton, some ground of hope seemed still to be left above the waste of fears. It was agreed that in a day or two Miss Compton should call again and let them know the result of her application; and, meanwhile, she charged Dora to get her things ready, and to have every article in her wardrobe in good repair; "for I warn you," she added, on leaving the room, "that if you *do* get into Shark and Grindwell's, you will have precious little time afterwards for your own sewing."

They both thanked her very warmly, and when she was gone, Dora's aunt said she had never seen a better or a handsomer woman. Dora's head, too, was a little turned round, but there was something knocking at her heart that was not quite so pleasant. Ought she not to tell her aunt how she met Miss Compton? Ought she not to speak of Mr. Sleek? Ought she not to mention the evening at Negri's? Were these things all right, proper, safe, for young girls? What would Mr. Barrow say? Ah! that was a sharp twinge! What, indeed, would he say, if he had seen her at Negri's, drinking that dreadful fiery stuff, that made the sparks fly out of her eyes? What would he have said to Mr. Sleek's complimentary and familiar chatter, and to his looks? Dora's head seemed to have come straight again, as she shut her eyes and fancied herself at school, in the monitresses' class-room, where they used to sit in a ring round their dear Father and Shepherd, and hang upon the words that fell from his lips. Certain charges of Mr. Barrow's to take our Blessed Lady for their pattern; to sit down for a little while, and picture her in the places and situations in which they were placed, came back vividly to Dora. Once again, as she had so often done before, she pictured

that Maiden-Mother at Nazareth, engaged in her daily tasks of labour and of love; she saw her pure, modest look, and gentle movements; she heard her sweetest voice. Could *she* have walked with Miss Compton? Could *she* ever have been found at Negri's? The very thought seemed a kind of blasphemy of holy things, and she started up as if she had been shot.

"Whatever is the matter with thee?" exclaimed her aunt, pettishly. "Thou'st shaken all the beads off my needle! Seems as if nothing pleased thee now. Get thy sewing, as the lady advised, and don't idle away the evening, throwing thyself about as if thou hadst fits!"

"Aunt, I want to go to the chapel to-night."

"Chapel, indeed! much it is chapel for you! No, no, my girl, that is too sudden a word to be for good! Get your sewing, and finish your skirt that was hung about so long. Chapel will stand over till the right time!"

Dora sighed. Even that little opposition caused some of her desire to ooze away; and sitting down to her sewing, she soon forgot all about Mr. Barrow and her good desires, in the intense interest of sewing the new trimming in a fashionable zig-zag on her skirt. The next day was spent between the shop and the wardrobe, and the next in the same manner; and then Miss Compton came again, in her black silk gown and shawl, and announced the delightful news that Dora was to make herself tidy and clean, and go with her to speak to Madame Cécile, the forewoman and manager at Shark and Grindwell's. It might have been supposed that Dora was going to be photographed, so particular was Miss Compton in arranging and re-arranging her gown,

her jacket, and her bonnet-strings. She was pulled, and pushed, and pinned, till even Dora herself lost patience, and exclaimed: "Oh! what a fuss about nothing!" for which she was duly reproved for being a pettish baby.

Nothing remarkable happened on the road, and they arrived at last in front of Shark and Grindwell's magnificent palace of plaster cornices and sham columns. Miss Compton walked boldly in, and Dora followed in her wake, her little heart going pit-a-pat very fast. All through the long range of shops they went, passing counter after counter, lined with simpering and staring young men, all dressed alike in black suits, with white ties, as if they had been a regiment of Scripture-readers out of place. Some of them spoke to Miss Compton, which made her lift up her head and give herself prim airs; till, in a corner by the cashier's desk, they suddenly came upon Mr. Sleek, also fitted up (externally) as a Scripture-reader, and carrying a leather despatch-box slung over one shoulder, as if he was just starting for foreign parts with important letters on Government business. He bowed and smiled his best to Dora, at the same time turning one eye on Miss Compton, and telegraphing with two fingers, at which she seemed infinitely amused. But a loud voice calling out repeatedly, "Mr. Sleek! Mr. Sleek!" he vanished, and the others went on upstairs, and through more and more rooms, till Dora's head seemed mazed, and she felt as in a bad dream, where one wanders through endless rooms, and never can find a way to get out of the labyrinth. But there came an end at last. In a little stifling den, cut out of the long room, and boarded up, sat a lady, also dressed in black silk, pinked and trimmed in every imaginable way, and with a body that looked

as if it were pasted on. This lady's face was brown, oval, and very regular, with a pair of grand blue-black eyes and eyebrows; hair to match, creped and rolled back; and on the crown of her head, perched in the way that Frenchwomen alone know how, sat a delicate little point-lace cap, with streamers of mauve ribbon floating behind. She was stout, well-made, and thoroughly handsome; yet there was a nameless something imprinted on her brow, her cheeks, her lips, her whole self, that made Dora shrink from her. She had never studied physiology, that poor little Dora; if she had, she would have known that a woman combining the velvet cruelty and the glittering poison of both tiger and serpent, is one at which the magnetic currents involuntarily shrink and quail.

"Ah! you are there, Meess Compton! Good day! Is that your little young friend? Come in, my good young lady; do not be too shy! Very good, Meess Compton, very good! You have done right! So, my young lady, you wish to come into this establishment and work for us?"

Dora tremblingly answered that she should be very glad, if she could work well enough. She was then told to run together two breadths of silk; and while she was doing so, Madame Cécile spoke in an undertone to Miss Compton. When her work was done, it was pronounced to be "fair," and she was told to come the next day, and bring her things. She was to be received into the house, and work from nine till nine o'clock, or from six to six. A printed list of regulations was given her to take home to her aunt, and then Madame Cécile swept her out of the room as if she had been a bundle of thrums. As soon as they were in the street, Miss

Compton broke into loud praises of Madame Cécile's kind manner to Dora, and Dora herself felt that the real business of life was begun.

And so it was. Step by step, the boundaries between the child and the girl, the girl and the woman, were passed over; the little sheltered spring had flowed into the fields, and was now growing into a river, rushing towards the open sea. At first, its course could have been shaped and turned in any direction, and by any guiding hand; now it had widened and deepened its volume, and was flowing rapidly beyond the power of any restraint. And there was no restraint attempted. It is sad to think, that of all the laughing babies and innocent girls in Mr. Barrow's school, very few were kept in sight when their school-days came to an end. Mrs. Waylett always took one or two, and saw one or two more on Sundays, and when she could; but there was no method, no plan, no organized effort, as in the Patronage of Paris, to retain these girls within the shelter of protection and advice; to find them suitable places, to apprentice them to safe houses, to ascertain that they approached the Sacraments, and kept themselves clean from the defiling influences of London homes. And so they drifted away, further and further, from the life of their childhood, from the traditions of their pure Irish homes, from the safeguards of their faith; and by hundreds, and in droves, went swiftly down the broad road of sin and degradation—to the streets, to the prisons, to the hospital-death.

Dora was a "young lady" at Shark and Grindwell's. She was dressed in black silk now, and her hair was frizzled with sticks every night, and rolled back in wavy golden rolls. She had a French crinoline, that trailed at the back, and her gown trailed beyond it by

half-a-yard. Whenever a grander carriage than usual stopped at the door, Dora was sent for to persuade the ladies to buy, and to try the mantles and shawls on her own slender and supple figure. Many a brother and many a son offered his services to his sister and mother in their shopping, for the sake of staring at Dora's silky hair and long eyelashes, and getting her to look up and speak, as they lingered behind their lady companions. And many a one came again and again alone, and, after a while, tried to find out where Dora lived, and when she went out, and what she liked, that they might make or find occasion to lead her wrong. And through all the rising storm of danger and temptation, Dora kept away from Mass and confession, and was daily losing, more and more, the grace of her dread of sin.

What a life it was! After a short, feverish night, passed in the stifling den where the "young ladies" slept, without decent shelter, or ordinary accommodation for cleanliness and health, Dora hurried on her clothes, snatched a moment for a thoughtless prayer, and went down to the workroom for two hours. The loosened tongues immediately began to dilate upon the last night's amusements: the play, the cheap concert, the common ball; whatever could stimulate the half-torpid mind, or stir up a momentary passion, was dwelt upon with flavour and intent; and, when a few only were present, several of the girls did not hesitate to speak of casinos of evil repute, and of words and conduct they had witnessed there. After two hours' work, the bell rang for breakfast, and they trooped down to a long narrow room, where tea and coffee, and bread and butter were spread. Often Dora

was so parched with thirst from the heated workroom, that she could not eat, and the coffee made her more feverish still. Ten minutes were allowed for breakfast, and then the workroom and talk began again. And, as the morning advanced, Madame Cécile would appear in a morning wrapper and slippers, dirty, dishevelled, and fierce, dealing harsh words and sharp rebukes around, especially to those whose ill-health, or want of good looks, seemed to detract from the honour of the establishment. Every kind of tale was circulated in the workroom about Madame Cécile. Some said she was a French ballet-dancer, who could dance no longer; some, that she was the illegitimate daughter of an Italian prince; some, that she was a partner in the establishment; others, that she had not sixpence in the world, but could tell ruinous stories of Shark, which made him keep her out of fear. The real truth, more infamous by far than all these fictions, was not known for many years. She had a house of her own in a neighbouring quarter, and there she boarded or received any girls whom she thought would make her house attractive; and there it was that she hoped to get Dora to take up her abode.

So, when foul and fierce words fell like hail upon the heads of the others, Dora received only petting and praise, which drew upon her the envy and hatred of the other girls, and the more by token, that Dora was so pretty, and was growing prettier every day.

At one o'clock, a quarter of an hour was allowed for dinner, except during the press of the season, when plates of meat were brought in, and the workwomen eat while they still sewed. After dinner they might walk up and down the room for a few turns, laughing and

talking, and then they sewed again—"stitch, stitch"—till five o'clock, when tea was brought into the work-room; and that was the only refreshing incident of the day. By that time, Dora found her joints aching so that she could scarcely sit up; her eyes swam, her head ached, her legs trembled to such a degree, that she could scarcely walk. Then Miss Compton, who was a kind of sub-forewoman, an "improver," whose time was nearly out, would send out for spirits, liqueurs, or wine, and force Dora to swallow the poisonous stimulant, which at first she loathed, but afterwards found an absolute necessary of life. And then one of the party began to read novels of an exciting kind, stories of passionate license, tales translated from bad French romances—anything and everything that would rouse the languid, and stimulate the weak to fresh exertion.

At nine o'clock the workwomen went to supper, when they had meat and beer or spirits, and after that they often sat up till twelve, still working on under the flaring gas, with evil talk, and evil songs, and evil insinuations pouring into their ears and filling their minds. Thus, the first thing and the last in the day was an occasion of sin, and a blight upon every good thought and desire.

## CHAPTER IV.



ORA'S chief thought about this time was, that she was one of the prettiest girls in London. She heard it so often, that it would have been wonderful if she did not lend faith to the pleasant idea. All her money was spent in collars, cuffs, studs, velvet for her neck, *bouquet de mignonette*, hair washes, French boots and gloves; upon the million of fopperies, in short, which women waste their time in inventing, in wearing, and in wanting, but which undoubtedly do add a great finish to dress, and possess a certain charm of refinement even to the most refined. Every spare moment was spent in tossing up some new rag of a bonnet or bonnet-cap, some ruche for the neck, or, flim-flam for the hair. It was a pity Dora had not read Carlyle, or studied his Philosophy of Clothes; but, on the contrary, she had a counter-philosophy of her own, common to most of Eve's daughters, which held that clothes are an institution, a kind of religion, or at least a *fetish*—something saving and healing—the sublime art and study of life. Alas! for the Sacraments and for modest, holy living, when this cruel mania possesses a female brain! Dora became so blinded by her own folly, that she almost regarded it as a *duty* in a pretty woman to dress herself as well as she could, and that all men's duty was, in return, to admire and pay her court. One of the

people who had helped her to this exact and accurate knowledge of her good looks, was a young man in the haberdashery "department" down stairs, named Albert Halliday. He was tall and thin, according to the general regulation requirement of counter-jumpers, with long, loose legs, of no special shape, arms to match, and slim, sickly white hands, which he was never tired of admiring, while limp black hair, which he carefully curled and tended, hung about his face. According to the other requirement of counter-jumper volunteers, he wore also a thin black moustache, which finished his resemblance to those obliging figures in a hair-dresser's window, who stand all day motionless to display some new mode of arranging the hair. Halliday had also a killing pair of large dark eyes, about whose expression the less said the better. He admired Dora of course, as no man could help doing, but he affected her company the more, because, when they were walking or driving together, her fair, delicate beauty contrasted so well with his dark, Byronic style. Many, therefore, were the hours spent surreptitiously in her company; and on Sundays they nearly always drove together to Wimble-don, Richmond, or Norwood, where they eat and drank of the best in other company of the like kind, and so utterly destroyed in Dora's mind those last outworks of reserve and retirement, which stand all women in such good stead. Those Sunday hours, when Mass had been neglected, when God was forgotten, and His commandments set aside; when all good, and holy, and pious things were put out of sight, and drowned by a flood of light, frivolous, frothy talk, bordering on the utmost license, without shocking by license committed; those long, bright, sunshiny hours, which seemed to sing, as

they flitted by: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die;" those hours which we all have known, in one shape or another, and with more or less harm, as the rose-garden of life—filled to the brim with folly, with jesting, with empty mirth, and yet with bewitchment: these were the hours which quenched the last sparks of grace in Dora's soul, and led her swiftly down to final ruin.

Hard work, such as Shark and Grindwell's work-rooms required, became insupportable—insupportable to the body as well as to the taste. Late hours, excitement, and constant talking and laughing, are, of themselves, an enormous drag on the frame; and when daily labour is added to these, the strain causes either the body or the mind to fail. Dora became liable to tears, hysterics, and fainting, as most of her trade do become; and more and more stimulants were given her in the most reckless degree, till her health seriously suffered, and she was threatened with nervous fever. As she was one day lying, racked with pain, in one of the close little upstairs dens—and I wish it may be some day the lot of everyone who reads these words to go into the sleeping-places of a first-rate establishment, like Shark and Grindwell's—when a slow step mounted the stairs, and Madame Cécile's substantial figure darkened the narrow doorway.

If the anatomy of that personage had been correct, and she had been furnished with a heart as well as with an excellent liver and lungs, she must have felt some pity for Dora then. Her fair young head was lying low down on the pillow, upon which lay the thick coils of her golden hair, which, even by itself, looked languid and sick, though none the less beautiful. Her

large thick eyelids drooped over the sunken eyes, letting the thick-fringed eyelashes fall on her cheeks, which burned with a large round crimson patch of colour in the middle of the dead white. Her small mouth was half open, and her thick, heavy breathing came through her parched lips with difficulty.

Madame Cécile looked. Is she sorry? Is she sympathizing at last? She says, between her round white teeth: "I hope it is not too late! What a pest girls are! Always too soon or too late! No; I believe the thing is not going to die!"

She touched Dora's arm. "My dear, my pretty dear, what would you like to have?"

"Drink! drink!" said Dora, half opening her eyes. "Oh! please, something cool to drink!"

"Poor pet; it shall have some lemonade!" replied Madame Cécile; and she uncorked a bottle she had in her hand, and poured out a glassfull of lemonade, and gave it to Dora, who drank greedily, murmured a "Thank you!" and lay back again on her pillow.

Again Madame Cécile spoke. "My dear, I want you to be moved into my house. It is very near here, and I think you will be more comfortable there, now you are ill."

"You are very kind, Madame," said poor Dora. "I should like it very much."

"Should you? Then I think we can go now. I will send for a cab."

So Madame Cécile went off, and soon returned, saying, the cab was there, and Dora must be helped out of bed. Several hands came out of the workroom and helped to wrap her in sheets and a blanket, and to cover her head with a light shawl, and to carry her down

stairs to the cab. The fresh air made Dora feel dizzy and blind, and she remembered nothing more till a strong pungent smell in her nostrils, and a loud sound in her ears, seemed to usher her again into the visible world. She was lying in bed, in a large, cool, airy room. She was in a pretty French bed, with a spring mattress. The walls were of a pale green and white, pleasant to the eye. Flowers were on the table, and looked in at the window, and a refreshing smell of some kind of vinegary compound pervaded the room. An old woman, who looked like a nurse, was sprinkling the bed and the floor, and had apparently well watered Dora with the same fluid, for her face and head were quite wet. When she saw that Dora's eyes were open, and that she was taking in what they beheld, she stopped her aspersions, and said, in a smothered kind of mincing voice: "So you are come to your senses, my little dear? I am glad of it, indeed! And you will do well now you are here."

"Where am I?" said Dora.

The nurse looked amused, and said: "Never fear, dearie! you'll know all about it when you get round. 'Where am I?' indeed. Well, that is a good one to begin with! Now, you shall have some broth."

"I could not drink it, nurse; please give me something cool."

"I think *you* are about as cool as anything I know of!" muttered the dame; but she muttered and chuckled it to herself; and pouring out a tumblerful of orange-water, she brought it to the poor, fevered girl, who drank it as if devoured by flames.

So the day went by. The hot sun rose higher and higher, and poured long arrows of flame into the shaded

room, in which millions of atoms danced and twirled. Then the bed seemed to bake and glow, and all the turning round in the world could not help Dora to a cool place in it. The pillows seemed like lumps of stone. When she raised her head to drink, the room went round and round, and everything seemed sliding down to one corner of it. The figures on the wall-paper grinned and mocked; the curtains were full of faces grinning and mocking back to them. And still she must drink, and drink, and drink. It seemed the one idea, the one object of all existence.

When evening came on, the figures grew larger and more distinct, the faces more hideous, the pillows more stony, and the bed more burning. And then Dora found herself talking and beginning to sing; and she could not stop herself. She talked to the faces on the walls, to the grinning and mocking figures that danced in the room, to imaginary creatures, to herself. She longed to stop, but she could not. Wonderful words, words which she never could have thought of when well; fine poetical sentences, which she could never have put together, seemed to fly out of her lips; and do what she would, she could not stop talking. And then she became frightened, and lost all command of herself; and uttering loud cries and screams, she passed into the dilirium of brain-fever: and the doctor said he could not answer for her life.

Yet Dora did not die. Sad as her death would have been, it would have been well for her to have died on that bed; but though we can choose our life of grace and our death of sin—life everlasting, or the quenchless flames—we may not choose our hour of agony, nor go down at will to the dark valley. Dora did not die.

She was nursed, and tended, and doctored with care; and the dial went back for her, as it did for the Jewish king, and she rose up from her bed of pain, to begin again a life of offence and reckless sin.

One evening, when she was sitting up in an easy chair, dressed in a pretty white wrapper, with blue ribbons, she heard a whispering conversation in the next room; then Madame Cécile's laugh, toned down by caution; and, after more whispering, Madame Cécile's subdued voice, saying: "Oh! sir, certainly! without doubt: no difficulty at all!" And Madame Cécile entered the room.

"Awake!" she said, with well-feigned surprise. "Ah! that is good. My pet, I am going to introduce to you a gentleman who wishes to make your acquaintance. He will explain why himself."

She returned to the door, and sweeping back with her gliding French step, brought with her a gentleman, whom she introduced as "Milord Fitz—" something or other. He was not Milord, however, except in French, but a certain well-known Colonel Fitz-Brudenell. A gentleman, alas! he was. A gentleman—that is, by blood, by birth, and by the accidents of fortune, education, and position in the world; of ancient, time-honoured blood, the heir to a fine old house, taught at Eton and at Oxford how a man should bear himself as an English gentleman, and be an example to those of a lower rank. His mother, Lady Sybella Fitz-Brudenell, and his sisters, Violet and Maude, were all that women ought to be, to teach men what women are, and how they ought to be regarded. There was no excuse for this handsome, violet-eyed young officer, who now came with his refined manners, his bewitching

voice, his soft, crispy curls, and all his graceful, winning fopperies, to win the greedy vanity and the weak heart of this poor milliner's girl. Shame! shame upon him! sitting there and chatting his pretty sparkling chat, as if he had a right to do it, and as if nobody could blame him! He talks of her health, and how wrong it is in her to risk her life in labour which is quite unfit for her—so delicate, and tender, and pretty as she is. He tells her that there are few ladies—real noble ladies, able to wear coronets in the House of Lords—so pretty as she is, or who can be compared with her in his eyes. He says she must and shall be a lady too; that she shall have a house, and servants, and horses, and diamonds, and everything that money can buy. All he asks of her in return is, to live with him and be called by his name, and to put herself under his "protection" altogether. And then he dares to lay his jewelled hand upon the soft coils of her golden hair, and to draw her towards him, as if he were honestly and honourably asking her to be his wedded wife, joined in the holy bond of the sacrament of marriage.

It is an awful power that is given into the hand of man. There was taken from the sleeping Adam, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, the creature which, when animated with the Divine Breath, became his helper and his companion, his second conscience, and his guardian angel. And that very bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, moulded and quickened with his heart's blood, became also his tempter, his ruin, his punishment, and his curse. And so, by the inevitable cycles of Nature's laws, it seems as if the woman was evermore drawn by an irresistible attraction to the side of man, from which she was taken; and as if he who

was first tempted and led away, must, till the end of time, avenge himself by seducing and ruining the woman in his turn. It needs not that her eyes should be attracted by his beauty, or that her mind should be deceived by qualities that are feigned. It is the ear which is the fatal entrance to the passion that destroys. As a bird is first hushed, and then brought within reach by the serpent; as the serpent himself glides nearer and nearer to the flute-player who charms him; so is a woman beguiled, bewitched, subdued, and bound in the chains of death, by the voice of man.

And so was Dora bewitched and bound. She thought of nothing, reflected on nothing, weighed nothing, feared nothing. She heard the voice, and listened to its sweet beguiling lies. She knew, *her reason knew*, that everything it said was a lie; she knew, *her reason knew*, that she could never be happy in silks and diamonds, if she were living in mortal sin; she knew, *her reason knew*, that horses and carriages would not keep her from remorse and from hell, if death surprised her in mortal sin. She knew, *for her reason knew*, that God was always the same; and that yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, His commandments also are unchangeable, and that He must punish sin. But she listened to that voice, going on and on; she listened to that voice, weaving a tale full of the pictures and images of pleasure, just as Eve listened under the tree of knowledge of good and evil: and reason, and conscience, and hell, and heaven, and the commandments, and God Himself, all vanished away as in a dream of sleep; and she stretched forth her hand, and plucked and eat of the forbidden fruit and its deadly sweets.

## CHAPTER V.



TS deadly sweets! But the sweets came first. It is idle, and worse than idle, to say that sin has not its sweets. "*All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.*" And such as they are, they are given. The compact is strictly kept: "*To-day for thee.*" In sermons, and missions, and exhortations, both public and private, enough stress is not laid, enough allowance is not given, for *the intense pleasure of a sinful life*. The pleasure of it is so intense, that years and years of penal servitude, months of confinement in the dark cell, in the jacket, and in irons, with sparest diet of bread and water, and much discipline of cruel stripes, are not enough to prevent men and women from forfeiting their liberty, and returning to long years of captivity over again. And so Dora had her sweets. The silks and laces, the jewels and knickknacks, the house and furniture, the carriage and horses were hers. Instead of early rising from a narrow iron bed in the "young ladies'" pandemonium, she lay luxuriously late on her spring mattrass, shaded by muslin curtains and their pink linings, sipping her strong tea or chocolate out of real china, and reading the papers between the whiles of feeding her pet dogs. When she chose to get up, her French maid even put on her stockings and shoes. Her dress, her hair, her hats, her trinkets, were the talk of the season. If she

liked to ride, her beautiful horses were the admiration of the Row; and as she sauntered up and down in her fashionable riding habit and glossy little hat, there was not a man of any note or mark in London that did not carefully raise his hat, and watch for her recognition, and boast of it afterwards to his friends, and, alas! also to his partners, as a distinguished honour. If she preferred driving, her pony-carriage and its fiery little Hanovarian ponies were marked as "the best thing of the kind going." And when seated by Colonel Fitz-Brudenell's side, they dashed along in his drag or mail-phæton, there was not a man about London who did not admire and applaud, and look upon him as a "lucky dog," to have engrossed to himself "the star of the day."

Could any one in his senses deny that this was "sweet," compared with the Shark and Grindwell workroom, and Madame Cécile in her dressing-gown and temper? Besides which, there were little suppers, and little dinners, and little teas before dinner, and excursions by water, and pic-nics on land,—all of them, of course, in society of a like kind, in which there was a mixture of the utmost license and gaiety of intercourse, with a certain decorum of action and grace of manner, such as high breeding and want of principle alone can combine, and which lend an unspeakable charm to the hours as they fly—a charm which many good men have recognized, by owning that if there were no eternity and no sin, they, too, would have their fling in this life. Two years, and rather more, passed in this way, and then Fitz-Brudenell succeeded, unexpectedly, to an earldom, and it became expedient for him to finish sowing his wild oats, and to marry; and it was inexpedient for him to marry the

little milliner's girl, beautiful though she was, and she must be "settled" suitably to his means. Poor Dora! Wild and wicked as she was, she had hardly looked forward to this. She had been so far faithful to her faithless lover, and she really loved him too; and now she was to be left off, laid aside, like one of her old hats that was out of date, and she could never return to her former life, or be what she was before: and now, for the first time, she drank the bitter draught of being neither wife, widow, nor maid. But tears, and sobs, and hysterics, and even kneeling in imploring despair, were all in vain. Charlie Fitz-Brudenell was one man, and the Earl of Glossop was another. The poor little thing was really quite a bore; it was a nuisance that she had feelings; he had no idea of it; he thought that sort of thing was quite unknown among girls of her class. Besides, he intended to come down handsomely enough: what more could she look out for or want? It was really just as well something had turned up, for she was getting faded and done up, though still pretty enough, by Jove, to ruin fifty more fellows! So he got away, "for a day or two," to the Isle of Wight, wrote her a long letter, enclosing a cheque, and his plans for her; told her to be a dear little Pussy, and to amuse herself with as many good fellows as she could; and then thought no more of Dora and her ruined life. But when Dora got the letter, she looked at it with tearless eyes for one hour, and then tearing it into a thousand fragments, she stamped upon it, and went out with an evil and terrible light in her eyes. The sweets were over now; the deadly poison became bitter and more bitter every day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two years, and nearly the half of a third, had passed; when one morning the door-bell of St. Martha's Home rang sharply, and Dr. Harley asked to see Sister Lettice "immediately." Short and authoritative as he always was, he seemed more than usually so to-day; and the portress laughingly said, as she gave the message:

"Do please come soon, Mother, or I shall be snapped in two!"

Miss Turvile went down instantly; and as soon as she saw the eagle face and upright form of Dr. Harley, standing, as usual, erect on the rug, she divined that something more than commonly distressing had occurred.

"What is the matter?" was all that she said.

"Matter enough! Can you put on your bonnet, and come to St. Matthew's Hospital?"

"Now, directly?"

"Yes. I mean without your having to tell Sister Elizabeth to tell Sister Mary to tell Sister Alice to tell Bridget to go and buy the potatoes for dinner."

"The potatoes are peeling at this minute, happily. If such an august personage can wait for two minutes, my bonnet will be on."

When she was gone, Dr. Harley's face relaxed to a broad and satisfied smile. He sat down deliberately in an arm-chair, and said aloud: "That woman is a real comfort. I only hope she does not know it." He had barely time for this brief monologue, when the door opened, and Miss Turvile again appeared in her neat bonnet and cloak; and, with her small bag, was ready for anything that might come in her way. As soon as they were in the street, Dr. Harley said:

"This is one of the worst cases I have ever seen. The girl has been first seduced, and then rushed through

every sin. She is a Catholic, but will not tell me her real name. She has lived in fine style formerly. I wish I had hold of that fellow by the throat, that's all! Confound it, its enough to make a man swear up hill and down!"

"Is she very ill? will she die?"

"Yes; she is in the last stage of such a life—consumption—and everyway wasted to the last degree. But I am afraid she is not penitent either. Try what you can do."

"Do you think we could move her to St. Martha's?"

"No, no! I think that would not do. You will see there is too much disease. Perhaps she will let out more to you. Don't know anything till she tells you herself."

They were at the hospital door, that ever-open, wide-flung door, that might have stood as an emblem of Christian charity, so continual, so various, so catholic, was the constant stream that ebbed and flowed through its broad portal. To a small ward, containing only few beds, set apart for very bad or infectious cases, Miss Turvile was guided by Dr. Harley, and there, in a corner of the room, lay the prostrate and emaciated form of the young woman of whom he had spoken. Could anything so wasted, and haggard, and hollow-eyed be living? There was no colour in her lips, but her cheeks had the vivid consumptive spot, and her enormous, restless, glittering eyes seemed to sparkle with fever-heat. Her thick fair hair was pushed back from her face, and one hand was continually pushing it still, as if her temples could not bear the heat. Her heavy, fetid breath came in thick gasps, and at times the cough tore her as if with the fangs of some cruel beast.

Dr. Harley looked at her for a few minutes. Then going round to the side on which she was lying, he stooped down, and said, in the tenderest tones of his deep voice: "Here is the lady I told you would come. She will talk to you a little, and you can say what you like to her. Tell her if you fancy anything, and you shall have it."

The girl lifted up her large heavy eyelids, and looked at him. "You are very kind," she said, in a loud, hoarse whisper; "I never thought a *man* could be so kind or good! Thank you, though it is of no use."

Dr. Harley turned shortly away. "Do what you can," he repeated, in a low voice, to Miss Turvile; "she wants every help." Then he went out into another ward.

Sister Lettice sat down beside the bed, and raised the pillows a little, and straightened the clothes, and sprinkled them with *eau de cologne*. The smell, once so familiar, seemed to bring back former scenes to the dying girl, and she began to talk to the Sister as a friend. Bit by bit, in disjointed fragments, she retraced her life, and took it back to its first sources from the streets, and slums, and common lodging-house of the lowest outcast, to the time of her first seduction—to her working life, to her service in Mrs. Waylett's nursery, to Father Barrow's school; and then, for the first time, Sister Lettice learned, while her heart seemed to freeze with horror, that this poor, haggard, hollow-eyed skeleton was the long-lost Dora, for whom Mr. Barrow had so sought and prayed.

She told her to be still for a moment, and rest, and that she would soon return again; and having inquired of one of the house-surgeons and learned where Dr.

Harley was to be found, she quickly sought him in an upper ward. As soon as she entered it, he went to her, and took her out of hearing of the patients' beds.

"What *do* you think?" she could only utter. "This girl is Dora Hammond, for whom Mr. Barrow has looked so long. Oh! what will he say?"

"Dora Hammond! Was it she that was living with —? Oh! well, no matter now! I will send directly for Mr. Barrow. I cannot go, for there is a case I must see to without loss of time."

He sent off a swift messenger, and Miss Turvile returned to Dora's bedside.

But when she spoke of Mr. Barrow, there came no softening light into those glistening eyes—no ray of comfort on that white and stony face. "Would you not like to see him again—your dear old loving Father?"

"It is too late," whispered Dora, hoarsely.

"It is *never* too late, while we live."

"You may say so! You don't know!" gasped the girl, not yet nineteen, shuddering a little. "What do *you* know of life in the streets, in the gutters, in the dancing-rooms—in *hell*? Don't talk to me about priests or about goodness! I hate the very sounds!" She turned round with her face to the wall, and hid herself under the clothes.

Miss Turvile took hold of her little crucifix and held it fast. She seemed to clasp our Lord by the feet, and to hold Him that He should not go. There was still life, still time. Surely He would not bring this poor torn and mangled sheep within sight of the fold, and then let the wolf seize his prey at last? Faster and more fervently than she had ever prayed yet, she sent

up the cries of the heart for this lost lamb. She felt, she *knew*, that no prayers went up from the bed on which she lay. Oh! folly beyond all words, that trusts to the fear of death for repentance! Oh! folly beyond that of fools, that trusts to the light of the dying hour to open the eyes sealed by an evil life! But thanks be to Him who, even in this darkness, walked beside His bark—thanks for ever be to Him and His love, there was still the strong might of intercessory prayer!

And she was praying still, when the short hurried tread of men's steps advancing made her take her hand from her eyes, and Mr. Barrow and Dr. Harley came into the ward and to the bedside. Mr. Barrow's face was pale and set, and it seemed as if a strong will alone controlled his almost uncontrollable emotion. Miss Turvile immediately rose to leave him undisturbed. He grasped her hand. "Do you find any change?" he rapidly asked.

"None. She seems, as yet, only to despair."

Dr. Harley's carriage was at the door, and after a few words of direction and help for Miss Turvile, he bade her good-bye for the present, and was rolled off to an urgent case in the country; for his practice and his help ranged from court households and ailing ministers, to the slums of St. Giles's and Westminster; and all the variation that was seen in either extreme was, that whereas with the high and mighty of the land his caustic, shrewd, and humorous appreciation of character broke out with greater force, so among the poor the delicacy of his charity, his untiring patience and forbearance, and the tenderness and ingenuity of his benevolence, shone out and spread abroad with a profusion amazing to those who did not thoroughly know or value his character.

Sister Lettice was sitting in the nurse's little room when Mr. Barrow left Dora's bedside. He came in, and, after a few words, fairly broke down. "I see no change whatever!" he exclaimed at length, in broken sentences. "Nothing but cold, hopeless despair! O my God, have pity on this poor lost sheep! Why should she utterly perish? Nothing, not the old recollections, not the old associations, will move her the least. This is the worst thing I have ever known. One of my very best children—one of my own lambs! O my God, show mercy at the last hour!"

Deeply moved, the Sister inwardly prayed, while she strove to check her tears and preserve the calm of hope, and to bear up against the desolate feeling of horror that began to steal over her heart. She had never *yet* seen the death-bed of hopeless despair, never *yet* known the ministrations of that noble parish priest to be utterly in vain. Was this awful page now to be added to her varied experience? was the hour to pass and no sign to be made? . . . . .

Suddenly it came to her mind that Dora had been enrolled in the Confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows. "Never has it been known," she exclaimed, with a fullness of faith such as she had scarcely experienced before. "Father! Dora was a child of Our Lady of Sorrows! She never can die forsaken by God! If you will stay here the while, I will go to the priest's house, and get as many of the members summoned as have time; and while they are praying before the altar, you will find a change."

"Do so! do so!" rapidly and joyfully exclaimed the good priest, animated by fresh hope. "You are right, my dear friend; I had forgotten that Dora was enrolled,

Oh! if it were not for the boundless mercy of our God, where should we all stand?"

Miss Turvile left the hospital, and quickly went on her errand. As soon as it was known at the priest's house, and at the Home, and at the school, that Dora Hammond was found at last, and was dying in an hospital, and dying impenitent, no words could express the mingled sorrow, and grief, and fervent charity that kindled all hearts. Like one family, or rather like one body, their occupations were suspended, or abridged, or transferred to other hands; and soon a brigade of the members gathered before the beautiful image of Sorrowful Mary, candles were lit, and voices were raised in solemn strains, alternately with heartfelt prayer, for the poor lost sheep not yet reconciled to the Good Shepherd, wearied out with seeking and bringing her home.

After seeing this, and after herself praying with many tears, Sister Lettice went back to the hospital, when the head-nurse quickly came to her, and told her that "the young girl" was dying.

Rapidly the Sister traversed the double ward, and came to Dora's bedside. Mr. Barrow was kneeling, the tears streaming from his eyes, reading with a clear and audible voice the prayers for the dying. White and stony as ever, ghastly and fixed, was the upturned face that lay on the pillow, seemingly unconscious of tears or prayers. Sister Lettice put her arm under her pillow, sat down on the other side of the bed, and drew the worn and wearied head upon her lap. The deep-set eyes opened, and fixed upon the face that hung over her like an angel. A shiver ran through the feeble frame. "Mother!" broke, in a gasping whisper, from her lips. Mr. Barrow stopped reading.

“Dora, dear Dora! you are dying!” said the Sister, in a clear voice. “This is your last hour, and here is your own dear parish priest, Father Barrow, come to help you. Will you not tell him you are sorry for your sins? Will you not make with him one little act of contrition?”

Dora’s lips moved, but no sound was heard.

“Look at this,” said the priest, holding the crucifix before her eyes. “Make one sign, my child; Jesus loves you now. He has loved you always. He will love you for ever.”

“Mother!” again gasped Dora.

She raised her hand, and pressed the crucifix to her lips. In that act she died.

“O Father, Father! She is dead without the Sacraments! without confession!” cried Sister Lettice, with bitter tears.

“But *not* without hope,” replied the priest. “No, thanks be for ever to the unspeakable pity of our God, *no one* has ever sought the help of His Mother in vain! But never, in my whole life, have I seen a soul so near to perishing in despair.”

He left directions with the nurse about the bringing of the body to the church, and then took Miss Turvile to the Home. And almost as soon as she reached it, she went to her bed, and did not leave it for many days.

## WHAT BECAME OF THE COCK AND PIN.

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### CHAPTER I.



OKEWODE WALMESLEY was called to the bar, and passed his examination with great credit. From the time when the illness of a senior counsel gave him an opening—and he was complimented by an eminent judge on the clearness with which he mastered and condensed his evidence on very short notice—there was a change in the young man which steadily ripened into a different life. Some characters absolutely require the sunshine of prosperity to ripen their good qualities, just as some plants demand an almost scorching heat of the sun. As soon as Rokewode saw that a place was made for him in the wide world, and that it only depended on himself to secure its continuance, he put away childish things, together with a certain affectation of wrong and folly, and set himself steadily to go up the hill and win his colours. The time not spent in hard reading for his profession, was now given to literature, and especially to the study of social subjects, to which the companionship of a brotherhood of intelligent young men had inclined him; and he began to question

his mother upon her experience among the working-classes, and carefully to note down the valuable details of practical knowledge in which she was so excellent a mistress. Sometimes he went out with her on her visits, and not unfrequently suggested some principle or remedy which she found to work, and which had escaped her own notice. When they were alone together and in high talk—at which moments they were the finest company in the world, and finest of the fine when Dr. Harley also appeared on the scene—he used to call his mother the Relieving Officer, and she him the Detective. “For,” said she, “you are a true photograph, ‘Justice without Mercy,’ which I cannot abide, and which has no real likeness in it to the pattern we should follow.”

And then he, as the bass of the duet, would chime in: “That may or may not be, for I suspend judgment on the sentence; but leastways, that is more according to the fitness of things than Mercy without Justice, which *you* are, and which is not only wishy-washy weakness, but injustice to all the world.”

So, one evening they referred the dispute to Dr. Harley, who was slowly imbibing his fifth cup of tea; but he said it was so good to hear them wrangle, that he deferred the question to that day six months. But when the fifth cup was finished, he added: “The long and short of it is, you two must always hunt in couples, and then you will certainly scotch your game. At this moment, I am myself so running over with virtuous indignation, that I prefer Justice and *no* Mercy.”

“For why?” asked Rokewode, quite alive with interest.

“For why, of that detestable house, the ‘Cock and Pin,’ ” replied Dr. Harley. “You know, or at least

your mother knows well, how anxious I have been to get the idea of the Post-office Savings' Banks to work among the people in this neighbourhood. It has been next to impossible to prevail on the Irish to save at all. They owe this idea partly to their own miserable experience at home, where if there is a bad agent, or even a needy landlord, any little indication of neatness, or least sign of being well-to-do, is sure to raise the rent. It is this that keeps their cabins so miserable and uncared-for, and hinders them from making gardens, raising flowers, and the like. Well, when at last I persuaded some of the neighbouring poor to lay by a little, in case of sickness, or a confinement, or a death, down comes this detestable public-house with a goose-club, and all the men are taking out of the savings' bank and putting into the club."

"I don't know what a goose-club means, I am afraid," said Rokewode: "I mean what the harm of it is."

"It is one of those new-fangled catch-clubs, to make men spend money in drink," replied Dr. Harley. "Every meeting night, when the members pay their subscription for a Christmas goose, the custom is to spend so much at the public-house, *for the good of the house*; which, of course, turns out for the bad of everything else. And thus, this evening, as I went down on my way here, as I have often lately, to watch its course, I found Silence Charnley crying and stamping like a wild woman, because Roger was drunk again—pledge broken, bad habits renewed, oaths and abuse as thick as hailstones—all, as she justly said, through the Cock and Pin."

"I perceive," said Rokewode, deeply intent. "Of course, the publicans are quite wide awake enough to

see that the savings' banks and mutual aid clubs are working against spirits and beer, and that they must come to the same end their own way. And the way they work it is, that the said goose, when finally cooked, has been so well plucked, that it has been paid for over and over again."

"That is the cream of the joke," replied Dr. Harley; "which, though so transparent to lookers-on, is scarcely ever seen by the working men who walk into it. But of course the pleasure of the company, and the lights, and amusements always provided for them, all go to make the goose-club meetings pleasanter than an interview with the postmaster who keeps the bank. What we want is men's clubs without the question of religion being forced, lectures upon subjects they don't care two-pence about, and in which they are talked to as good little boys or naughty little boys, as the case and taste may be. They want clubs where they are trained as *free men*."

"Yes," said Rokewode, starting up, and taking Dr. Harley's usual position on the rug. "I should think, indeed, men *would* feel the degradation and silliness of that course! I wonder where I should have been, or what, if my blessed mother there had tied me up to a post, and preached at me in words of three syllables! Men must be free to work out their own way, their own wants, their own follies, more or less. It is better to have a little bubbling and screeching of steam-escapes, than to let the old boiler burst utterly, and scald I don't know how many folk to death!" And Rokewode bowed his lion-face down to his mother's, and asked her what she was thinking of.

"I was thinking of my tying this young giant to the

post, and how it was to be contrived," she replied, with the look that was kept especially for him. " I can scarcely manage my four-legged lion, let alone the lion with two."

Lion, the cat, conceiving that he was called into council, herewith waked up with a loud purring cry, stretched himself on his frilled toes, stuck up his fox-brush, trampled and purred round Rokewode, and ended by jumping on Dr. Harley's knee, where he looked as wise as Minerva's owl.

" Well done, old boy!" said Rokewode, stroking his broad, flat head; " you are for anti-goose clubs I'll warrant! But now I am not satisfied with knowing the evil, I should like, as the French say, to ' put a remedy.' What do you say to establishing a regular concern—reading-room, smoking-room, dining-room—where men can meet on equal terms, whether good boys or naughty boys, and make their own laws for their own government? Dr. Harley, I want your opinion very much."

" As to its efficiency, I can only at once warmly agree to the plan," said he; " but there is the practical difficulty, as usual, to be met with. These things require money to start them."

" Money!" repeated Rokewode, " yes, I know; and I wish I had at this moment all I have wasted. But I can make money now, and I will try and make a little for this. Mother, you have too much on your hands just now, so you shall give nothing at all this time, and you need not begin to speak either. But I want you to lend your head."

" My head is at your service, sir," she replied; " and as this is a free country, I suppose I may give my mite

also, if I choose. Dr. Harley, will you contribute, or are you going to lend your head only, too?"

"*Only, indeed!*" saucily echoed Rokewode. "Now, darling, you have put your foot in it! Dr. Harley does not reckon his head at a pin's worth, madam."

"Neither do I," answered Mrs. Walmesley, smiling. "Will you be quiet, child, and let Dr. Harley speak?"

"No," replied Rokewode, in a low voice.

"I tell you what we must do," said Dr. Harley, who, after depositing Lion on the rug, had been jotting with a pencil on an envelope. "We must get a few working people together, and take their advice. It is far better to work with them than for them only. I know an excellent fellow, not far off, who has collected for several societies, and has a head full of 'figures and facts.' It is Manson, the mason," turning to Mrs. Walmesley, "whom you visited in the hospital with rheumatic fever."

"I remember him well," she replied; "a good man, and very sensible and clear-headed. Many a half-hour I enjoyed, sitting by his bed."

"If you can settle an evening with him, and will allow him to come to the house, I will meet him," contined Dr. Harley; "and when we have drawn up the items required for rent, fixtures, furnishing, and starting, we shall see better what is possible. I should be against beginning with too small a place, or in a way that would not attract. Possibly we might manage to get together a committee, and annual subscriptions. The first thing will be to find a house."

"I have one in my eye," replied Rokewode.

Mrs. Walmesley looked up in pleased surprise at this. "Already? Where can you mean?"

"The Cock and Pin," coolly replied Rokewode.

"My dear boy, why fix on an impossibility to start with?" she said.

"Why call it an impossibility, I might reasonably retort?" he said, with a little smile for her.

"I am not at all sure that it is not a most excellent idea," said Dr. Harley, glancing up at the tall, well-poised figure on the rug. "It is always good to practise boldness, and to take the bull by the horns. We must only be sure we can manage it afterwards; then nothing could be better than such a protest against the vileness of the whole publican 'interest.' This much at least can be settled. Let me see: to-morrow I am engaged; Wednesday I may be called away; but Thursday I am quite free; and if you will settle with Manson, I will meet him here then at eight o'clock, always if convenient to you."

"No fear of that," replied Mrs. Walmesley. "And I will call on Manson or his wife.

"And now, if you please, madam, I will try to beat you at a game of chess," said Dr. Harley, whose greatest recreation was the chequered battle-field.

The men were set up, and undisturbed even by Rokewode's Mendelssohn and Beethoven, the war raged fierce and protracted far into the night.

## CHAPTER II.



T was, indeed, matter of history that Silence Charnley had been to the Cock and Pin to look for Roger. He was a good husband in the main, and could earn his thirty and five-and-thirty shillings a-week with ease. He was a gun-stock finisher, having left a good home at Birmingham, along with so many others, to better himself in the great capital. The honest Staffordshire artisan, with his thrifty Lancashire wife, were great friends and cronies of Mrs. Walmesley and of Dr. Harley. Whenever Mrs. Walmesley wanted a rest in her rounds among the neighbours, she contrived to make it in Mrs. Charnley's clean rooms, where the ladder of yellow-haired, square-shouldered babies, and the window-sills full of musk and Tom Thumb geraniums, made her think herself for the time in the canny north country, which she loved so well. Then the old familiar phrases of "lad" and "lass," "a canna justly say," "a thowt," and "wax and water-dish" for soap and basin, carried her back to the wide moors, with their dun-purple waste of blossom, and deep undercurrent of bee-music; to the sea-blown, stunted oaks, the inland flights of snow-white gulls, and the miles of smooth-ribbed sand, which stretch on the west coast of Lancashire, and along which, as a wild girl, she had nearly spent her days in galloping. And to Silence,

any one who knew the mysteries of the mills,\* of the guild-gatherings, which had always been her delight and pride, of the purple moors, the gushing becks and streams, the bogles,† and the clap-bread of her native home, shared the kind of sacred reverence in her mind for all that belonged to "God's own county."‡ Therefore were Mrs. Walmesley and Silence Charnley firm allies. "The Doctor" she regarded with reverential affection and attachment, partly because, as she said, he was "welly as guiding as a priest," and partly because her confidence in his professional skill was nearly equal to believing he could raise the dead. Besides which, whatever she asked him, whether on the subject of household matters, politics, or gardening, he never failed to give her a fund of information which might well appear inexhaustible. His shrewd and caustic remarks were also keenly relished by the north-country woman, and repaid by her in good kind.

When, then, Mrs. Walmesley heard that Silence was in trouble (for Roger had broken out of late, owing to London practices and London companions), she must needs go and see what she could do to lighten it. So the morning after that famous battle of chess, when finally her king had been shut up in his fortress, and died like a man, with two pawns, she sallied forth with waterproof cloak and umbrella, and arrived at the door just before a swift downpour of rain. It was easy to see that all was not as right as usual in the household. The breakfast-things were still about, and the table was not set with its usual neatness, and the children looked less clean and

\* Cotton factories.

† Fairies.

‡ The familiar name of Lancashire.

trim. Mrs. Charnley's sensible, fresh-coloured face was pale and tear-stained, and one side was swelled, as if by a blow. She brightened up at sight of Mrs. Walmesley.

"Now that's a good sight of a sad morning," she exclaimed. "I'll nobbut say as I'm glad to see you, ma'am."

"I heard you were in trouble, Silence; and then, you know, I must hear what it is."

"Yes, ma'am, you're always the same; and I do believe, and shall always say, that when you get a-gate of the trouble, it grows less. Now, Alice, lass, take the bags, and get off to school as fast as you can. Is David washed?"

"Yes, mother," said the sturdy urchin himself, lifting up his face to be examined and kissed.

After a little bustle, and a few directions and warnings, David and Hester, and Leonard and little Joseph, were marshalled down the stairs by Alice, nearly as wise and steady as her mother herself, and the clattering of their shoes and tongues gradually passed away. And then Mrs. Charnley's face settled down into a very sad and hopeless sorrow, as she took up one of her husband's shirts, and began to patch it neatly where it was torn.

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Walmesley, "I am so very sorry about Roger. Will you tell me everything you like about last night, and let us see if anything can be done?"

Two large tears, very rarely seen in Mrs. Charnley's eyes, rolled down upon her work. The hysterical lump so swelled in her throat, that it was a minute or two before she could answer. Then she resolutely wiped her eyes, and said:

"I never was so foolish-like before—never. But Roger were so desperate bad last night, I could not manage him any way; and then, when he began of his oaths and curses, I thowt it so bad the children should hear his words, and I told him so; and he said he did not care what became of the children, or me either, which I never knew of his saying anything so bad before; and I felt heart-broken like, as if I were stricken down to the ground; for I do love him, as you know, and have followed him, and will follow him, any road. But I must think to the children's good, and it drives me astray-like to see which road to take."

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Walmesley, gently, "I think you must not dwell at all on words said at such a time. Roger was very far from being himself, and never meant such a thing as he was wicked enough to say. He does love you dearly, Silence, and would go through fire and water for the children. Has he been so much of late at the Cock and Pin?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am; it is that dreadful house as has ruined all our peace. Onst, you know, he was as steady and regular to work as any one could wish; and owing to yon blessed man, the Doctor, he took to putting by money in the post-office, round in Wells-street, and so did a good many more as worked with him. Well, as soon as this gets abroad, what does the man at the Cock and Pin do, but set up a goose-club, for every one of 'em to put in so much to get a fat goose at Christmas. But I knowd well enough how 'twould be; goose was paid for over and over by the drink that was swallowed down on payng-in nights. And then they gets to betting and cards again; and Roger, his head was all upset, and he takes his money out of the post-office and puts it into the goose-club, and

more than half of it drunk out by the way. So I speaks to him, ma'am, very soft and kind, as you told me a wife always does best with, and he promises me very fair; but last night, worse luck, he takes my house-money, as I had to lay out for the week, and with that I goes mad with rage, for I did not know how I should make out to go on, and out I runs to the Cock and Pin, and lets fly at him as I never did before, and he was mad-like too, and swears he will never be followed about and taken to by a woman, and so he bangs off, and I have not seen him since. O dear! O dear! I cannot bear it; I cannot go on this way unless I know where he is."

A kind of despairing wail of weeping broke from Silence as she ended her sad story, and Mrs. Walmesley, who had not known the full extent of her troubles, sympathised with her, and bade her hope for the best, for she had no kind of fear that Roger would not soon return. Did Silence think they knew anything about him at the Cock and Pin?

Silence thought not. The landlord was staggered last night by something Dr. Harley had said to him, and had himself advised Charnley to go quietly home; in fact, Dr. Harley had spoken to him as he came out of the public-house, and had left them under the impression that he was returning home with his wife. Almost immediately afterwards, Roger, who had taken a great deal too much, had flown out into a drunken fury, and in spite of all her persuasions and tears, had flung her off, saying she should never again have the chance of looking for him at the Cock and Pin.

"So far so good," said Mrs. Walmesley. She hoped it was a prophecy of a changed life for the time to come; meanwhile she would give notice to the police, and advised

Silence to get prayers put up by the confraternity, and to pray herself with the children. They would be sure to bring about some great good.

Then, promising to come again very soon, she went away.

It was well for both of them that they did not know where Roger was, nor what he was doing. When he had flung off his good and faithful wife, he raged along through several streets, muttering and singing, till he was suddenly brought to a stand by three men, who cried out—"Bear a hand; look out, comrades, here are breakers ahead!" Intercepting his passage with the insidious offer of a glass of Jamaica rum, they drew him into a public-house; from one thing to another they led him on, till he had enlisted into the navy reserve, and after a short sleep on a bench, and a little tossing in a four-oar on the river, he was handed up the side of a large vessel engaged in recruiting for the Channel Fleet, and lying in the river till her list of hands was full. To-night they were dropping down to Gravesend; and while his wife was watering her pillow with tears, Roger was lying on the deck under the dim and fitful moonlight, sleeping the sleep of drunkards, and drifting unconsciously away from all that he loved.

## CHAPTER III.

HE select committee met at the appointed hour in Mrs. Walmsley's dining-room, when chairs were set in an orderly manner round the oval dining-table, and pens, ink, and paper made a very business-like appearance. The first signal—a modest knock—betokened the arrival of Manson, whom Jane ushered in as if against his protest, and after a great deal of shoe-rubbing in the hall. Almost immediately afterwards the peremptory double-knock and sharp ring of the president of the council was heard, and Dr. Harley deliberately seated himself and spoke a few words to Manson. Then, turning to Rokewode, he said: "Will not your mother come down to us?"

"I fancy she thought her presence 'superfluous,' as Yankees say," replied Rokewode. "I have no doubt she will come if she is asked."

"Ask her," returned Dr. Harley. "I am fond of superfluities, and you may be sure she will see twenty things we shall miss."

"You may swear to that," said Rokewode, leaving the room. He soon returned with Mrs. Walmsley, who, after a courteous greeting to Manson, and a short aside, which seemed to amuse her, with Dr. Harley took her place by her little round table at the fire, where she worked by the light of a reading-lamp, and lent all her attention to the committee.

They first opened business by laying the idea before

Manson, with an injunction to prudent silence for the present, and told him to put down a rough estimate of rent, furnishing, lighting, &c. When this was done, Dr. Harley asked if he knew the rents of any public-houses in the neighbourhood. Manson named several. Well, then, how much did he suppose the owner paid for the Cock and Pin? Manson did not know, because, he said, the house had such an atrocious character, he had never been inside it, nor ever would send there for his beer. But he could easily find out. He believed it was more than the "Squirrel" (one of those he had named), on account of its being a capital situation. Great was his surprise, when he heard that it was wished to get that very house for the new club.

"Bless you, sir," he said to Rokewode, "that would swallow a power of money! Why, the Cock and Pin has more custom than any house in the district!"

"Then there is the more reason to put it down," said Dr. Harley.

"That's true, sir, if you can," replied Manson. "But though the men know as well as possible that it is a trap to every one of them, and the women have been in shoals to fetch out or look for their husbands, still every one loves the house, because of the amusement they get there."

"What sort?" asked Rokewode.

"Anything, everything, sir," replied Manson. "Sometimes dancing-girls, with stilts or a tight-rope; sometimes a learned dog; sometimes a singing woman, or a man playing the guitar; sometimes quite baby-children dressed up and dancing, and sometimes two or three glee-men; sometimes worse than these—things not fit to be seen or spoken of."

"Probably," said Dr. Harley, drily. "And, I suppose, drinking goes on double-tides at exhibition-times?"

"You may be sure of that, sir, and that is what the publicans know well. The Cock and Pin is up to all trades, and is the worst house by far of any about this neighbourhood. I'm sure, sir, a book could be written quite full of stories of souls that have been lost, and lives ruined, through thathouse. I've often thought that I would write down myself a few of the things I have known about it; for years go by, and every one is too busy to think; or else, I do believe, instead of the foolish tales people cry over and make plays about, they might cry to some purpose over the real horrors that go on before our eyes."

"You are quite right, Manson," said Mrs. Walmesley—"thoroughly right; and I shall beg of you, some time or other, when you are not quite so busy yourself—perhaps some Sunday night—to tell me a few of those things you have known, and I will try if I cannot make something useful out of them."

"Very good, my dear madam; I beg of you to keep that in sight," said Dr. Harley. "Well, Manson, I think you have made out about the best case I ever knew towards the Cock and Pin being the place for our club—eh, Rokewode?"

"I am adding up," he replied; "and more resolved than ever."

"Well, I must say, it does one good to look at Mr. Walmesley!" said Manson. "I believe, if he was so minded, he would go through a stone wall; and I am heartily for the same thing, if only the money can be got. What do you want to do as a total, sir?" to Dr. Harley.

"We want a working-men's club and reading-room, a dining-room and a smoking-room, with proper places to cook in," he replied. "The reading-room will do for a club-room for the present; but, later on, I should like a separate place for the club business and lectures."

"Do you mean it to be a benefit club, sir?"

"Yes; a sick and burial club, I should like. A fund to help our workmen, and keep them from the Devil's Bank in sickness, and from a dog's burial from the work-house."

"Does Manson know what the Devil's Bank is?" asked Mrs. Walmesley.

"Indeed, ma'am, I do," replied Manson, smiling; "and, I will say, it's a justly-given name. No one knows, ma'am, but one who has either lost or lived by it, the swallowing-up of labourers' money by the pawn-shop. I am quite sure, that, instead of fifty per cent. or seventy per cent. loss, as some reckon it, working people pay over and over again 120 and 150 per cent. for what they get. And as to the *habit*, ma'am, I know by some acquaintance I once had who did it, it is nothing but sheer gambling, and has just the same spirit with it."

"Very good. Then a sick and burial club we will have," said Dr. Harley, "and a good library of books and newspapers, and a place where those who like it may smoke. I don't smoke myself, but I see that it helps on a good many working-men; and, as there is not the slightest harm in it, in spite of all kinds of denunciations in print, I say let the men smoke if they choose. You are for that, Rokewode."

"Indeed, and rather," replied Rokewode; "and so is Manson, too. I often see him enjoying his weed." Manson laughed.

“Indeed I do, sir, and right glad I am to find you are not like some of what they call *philanthropists*, who are all for sermons, and lectures, and useful knowledge, and none for talking and laughing, smoking, or maybe a pint of beer. I am main sure, gentlemen, it would never draw our people from the public-house to set up a fine room, where gentlemen were always making speeches, and where “Silence” is written up in large letters. After work-time we must have a little liberty, and a good joke, too, if we can get it.”

“To be sure you must,” said Dr. Harley; “and very great muffs you would be if you didn’t. You want to enjoy yourselves and be free, and learn what you like, not to be crammed like turkeys for next Christmas with stuffing you would never pick up for yourselves. And if you feel this, how much more must the younger men? No, no; our club shall not be the publicans’ club; but it shall not be the Pharisees’ either. We must steer clear of both rocks.”

Manson quite entered into the fun of this, and after looking at his total of expenses for a while, said: “There are two things, sir, that would save expense, and perhaps make money too.”

“By all means, let us have them.”

“If you would join the Dining-halls’ committee, sir, the dining-room would pay itself; and in this crowded neighbourhood, I am next to sure there would be something considerable over.”

“A capital idea,” said Mrs. Walmesley; “and they are advertising now for rooms. I saw it yesterday in the paper.” She searched in the newspaper cupboard, where the papers of each week were laid till they were no longer likely to be wanted, found, and read the advertisement.

"True enough; and that shows the good of looking over advertisements, which some folks condemn as an idle amusement," said Dr. Harley, who had heard Rokewode laughing at his mother a few nights since for wasting her time in this sort.

"I cry you mercy, my lord judge!" said Rokewode, with a mock supplicating face. "In reparation, I will write to the committee and ask them to wait a while, and offer to put the dining concern under their management. Eh, mamma?"

"Dining and cooking, also, I should say," replied his mother. "It would be a great thing to have a really efficient management without our trouble or expense, and they would employ and teach ever so many of our girls. I am convinced they would learn them both cooking and behaviour, and this last without paying the twopence," she added, laughingly, to Dr. Harley.

"No satirical reflections, if you please, madam," he replied, in the same tone; "otherwise, I entirely agree with your remarks. So be it then. And now for that other proposition by which we are to make a fortune, Manson."

"Well, sir, I think if you could manage to open a co-operation shop in the same establishment, the neighbourhood would be set up."

"Manson, you deserve three times three, with honours!" exclaimed Rokewode, starting up, and taking his place on the rug. "It would be the very thing for the people, and do more to put down devil's banks and goose-clubs than all the rest! Do you remember, mamma darling, the co-operation shop at Rochdale, that we went to see two years ago in the canny old north?"

"Indeed I do, and all the good it worked among the

mill-hands. But, perhaps, Dr. Harley is not so much at home in this part of the scheme?"

"I confess I am not," he replied; "though I have often heard of the good they have done. But I scarcely know the principle on which it is worked?"

"It is this, sir," said Manson, after modestly waiting a moment to see if Rokewode was going to answer. "The goods are all got at wholesale prices, and of the best kinds; and those who keep the shop form a kind of committee of shareholders, and bind themselves to give back to their customers, after a certain time, the profits made over a certain point. So you see, sir, the customers get the best of food, good and wholesome, at the wholesale price, instead of bad pennyworths and waste; and, besides that, at the year's end, they receive a present like from the shop, which comes in like a Godsend, often when it is most wanted. This is done by joining or co-operating together, and it is found to be the greatest blessing to working men and their wives."

"I am quite sure it would be so," replied Dr. Harley, "if even in the matter of health alone; for the mischiefs done by bad food in large towns are far beyond what physic can cure. You mean, then, that if the lower part of the Cock and Pin were hired for the co-operation shop, that portion of the rent would be sure, and would be paid to the club, which would be so much off our shoulders? Well, I think our plans begin to take form and colour, and to present an appearance of much good. Anyhow, I suppose the committee has passed several resolutions. Rokewode, will you resolve yourself into honorary secretary, and write the memorandums?"

"1st. That the dining committee be written to.

"2nd. That Manson judiciously ascertains the rent of

the Cock and Pin, and whether it is let for a term or how long.

“3rd. That we move cautiously for a co-operative committee.

“And, fourthly, I move, of myself, that thanks all round be given to Mr. Manson, for his valuable hints and help this evening. I do not vote him three times three now, solely on account Mrs. Walmesley’s ears and nerves.”

“Mrs. Walmesley thinks Manson would rather decline so empty an honour,” she replied; “and that, if only he could see his suggestions carried out, he would be fully satisfied. But you must not go away without taking something, Manson. It is supper-time in the kitchen, and you must either stay for it, or have something before you go.”

Manson thanked her, and said he would take a glass of ale, and go home to his wife.

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## CHAPTER IV.

NIGHT or two after the reading-room and co-operation committee meeting, Silence Charnley went to the large dry goods’ shop near at hand, where she and most of the neighbours dealt for wood, soda, soap, and other such wares. A rough-looking man was talking to the master of the shop, and two women whom she knew were listening. One of them nudged the other as Silence came in, and said:

"Does she know it?" The other replied: "Hush! No."

Silence looked at them, and then saw who they were. One was a Mrs. Hart, whom she never cared to see much of; the other, Mrs. Halliwell, was a true friend, and a good, kind woman. She said a few words in a low voice to the master of the shop, and then went and stood by Silence while she bought her goods. Then she said: "Now, you can't carry all that load yourself. Let me help you along." Silence thanked her, and, having divided the parcels between them, they went out, while Mrs. Hart remained with her arms akimbo, gathering up from the sailor-looking man all the details he could give, in order to publish them abroad on the first occasion. Mrs. Halliwell went upstairs to Mrs. Charnley's room, and when she had slowly set down her load, said to Silence: "You have not heard anything yet?"

"Of Roger? Not a word. Have you? Is there anything—?" She stopped, gasping with a nameless dread.

"Nay, now you must not begin this road," said Mrs. Halliwell, kindly, and making her sit down. "Yon sailor-man has seen him, and has told us where he is. So you see he is not drowned, or lost."

"Thank God! Yes! yes! tell me all!" said Silence.

"He is gone to sea, my dear. I am sorry to say it. He has enlisted and gone to sea."

"Gone! Roger! Gone to sea? Then he will not come back! Oh! my husband!" And in her agony, Silence threw herself on her knees by the table, burying her face in her hands. Strong, shivering sobs ran through her, and shook her from head to foot, but there were no tears. Alice, the only one of the children not

gone to bed, came and knelt by her mother, and put her arms round her neck. Mrs. Halliwell brought her a drink of cold water, and made her, after a while, lie down on the bed. Then she made up the fire, and set on the kettle to get a cup of strong tea; knowing how sick and faint the poor woman would be when the first shock was gone by. Alice helped her with all her might, showing herself as usual nearly as helpful as a grown-up woman. When the tea was drunk, and Mrs. Charnley undressed and laid in bed, Mrs. Halliwell went away. Then came some of those moments which we all know in life; that bitterness of vinegar and gall, when all the help of all men is utterly vain, and we are left face to face with a deep, strange sorrow. In that desolate loneliness we *taste* the gall. The iron enters deeply into our soul. We utter again the wild, rebellious cry of six thousand years old: "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

So did Silence feel. She loved Roger so truly and heartily. She had so hoped for his conversion from drinking and play. She knew his impetuous, impulsive nature so well, she ought to have guarded against it. She blamed herself exceedingly for having irritated him by seeking him at the Cock and Pin. And now poor Silence felt that she could have cursed that wretched house—the gulf into which Roger and so many others were drawn. It was for that horrible den, the resort of gamblers, prize-fighters, and crimps of all kinds, the refuge of the harlot and the thief; it was for an hour of that coarse pleasure, that Roger had left his wife and children destitute of support. For, as she fearfully thought, the means of bread were struck off, and she much doubted whether her husband would send home any part of his wages. If he could leave her in such a manner, why

should he think of her at all? Her dear little clean rooms, where they had lived happy and respected so long; the quiet house, which was the children's home—all must be abandoned and given up. She thought of the helps and comforts she had known here; the Sunday's Mass, the school for the children, Mr. Barrow's visits, Mrs. Walmesley's and Dr. Harley's goodness, the half hours of pleasant talk with both, the contrivances of the latter in behalf of her housekeeping, the dodges and plans over which they had had so many a "crack" together—all recurred in crowds to her mind. These softened thoughts happily brought their own relief, and the fast-flowing tears were a sad refreshment and release from that terrible hard feeling which had made her feel so unlike herself.

Silence got out of bed, and knelt down to pray. She thought of what Mrs. Walmesley had said to her lately about the storm in which Jesus had walked on the waves: that in all storms, where grace is not lost, He still comes to us in the same way—near us, though we neither see Him nor hear His voice. And now, in this terrible hour of abandonment, Silence felt that He was there, and the thought brought with it an inexpressible calm. She spoke to Him in her own way, and put herself and the children into His hands. Then she got into bed, took some holy-water, and fell into a broken sleep.

Mrs. Halliwell was a widow, whose only daughter was married, and comfortably off; and, between whiles, she was employed as an outdoor associate of St. Martha's Home, in looking up unusual cases of distress, seeking the lost and tempted, and in other charitable works within her power. Before she slept, therefore, she had gone to the Home, had a short conversation with Miss Turvile, and

made known to her what Charnley had done, and how Silence and the children were left. And, as it chanced that Dr. Harley was also at the Home late, to visit one of the incurable patients who was dying, he also that night became acquainted with the circumstances, and had expressed his pithy opinions upon the same, though rebuking Sister Lettice with an excellent zeal, when she indignantly remarked, that it was only another instance to prove she was right in desiring that all the men in the world should be shot, or hung up on gibbets in a row.

So, while Silence was kneeling by her bedside, saying her prayers, two staunch friends were already turning in their minds what could be done for her help.

The next day, as soon as his patients had been dismissed at his own house, Dr. Harley ordered his carriage, and drove to Mrs. Walmesley's. As soon as he had told her the facts of Roger's enlistment, he said: "And now, what is to be done with this fresh widow bewitched? Will you open a refuge, or teach her that useful art in which you are yourself indulging?"

Mrs. Walmesley was illuminating a beautiful manuscript poem, the proceeds of which were to go to the incurables at the Home. She finished the letter upon which she was engaged, and then laying down her brush and palette, said: "Now, if we only had our dining-rooms!"

"An excellent institution certainly," he replied; "but how to the point at this moment?"

"Why, Mrs. Charnley is the very person to be matron," she said. "She is neatness and method itself, a fair cook, and respected by every one who knows her."

" You certainly have, at lucid intervals, the most excellent ideas of any woman I know!" exclaimed Dr. Harley. " It is just the thing. Did Rokewode write to the committee? What is their address?"

" He did indeed, and he took down the address." She searched in the direction-tray, and brought it.

" I will call there on my way to somewhere," said Dr. Harley, looking at it; " and tell them we have a first-rate matron already engaged. That will hasten their operations. And as to the Cock and Pin, if Rokewode does not do it, I will rout out that den of ruffianism with my own hands. As sure as I write myself Claridge Harley, I know I shall take to cursing and swearing soon!"

" I think you have done that some time since," said Mrs. Walmesley, smiling. " It is well that there are curses and curses, or I think you would be in a bad plight."

" If I had time, I would prosecute you for continued defamation of my character. But I don't care, now that Rokewode has turned up such trumps. What a regular brick the fellow is!"

" Ah! that is what has made me strong and young again," said Mrs. Walmesley, a slight colour flushing up into her pale cheek. " You have done him a whole world of good, which is one of the thousand things I never thank you for."

" No!" exclaimed the Doctor, starting up, " you are, without exception, the most thankless person I know! And, besides, you keep me chattering here I don't know how long, when I ought to be two miles off."

" And if you will wait one minute more I will give you my last Irish blessing—' *May every hair on your*

*head turn to mould candles, to light up the glory of Heaven! ”*

It was good to hear the Doctor laugh.

As to Rokewode's invectives and expletives, when he heard the story of Roger's enlistment, it is useless to attempt a description of them. He declared over and over again that nothing should prevent his putting down "that confounded and infernal Cock and Pin;" and when his mother gently laid her little soft hand upon his mouth, and bade him remember that good must be done by good means, and not with any mixture of evil, he kissed her hand, and then herself, but said he had a mind to take a mighty oath that night, that, before six months ran out, the Cock and Pin should be utterly ruined and destroyed.

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## CHAPTER V.

ALTHOUGH Roger Charnley was not shot, nor hung up upon a gibbet, according to Miss Turvile's generous plan for disposing of the most troublesome half of creation, he was suffering both in body and mind sufficiently to bring him to a sound state of thinking. He was terribly sea-sick, which is a good punishment for most offences, and he was sent here and there, in spite of his sickness and inability, and punished in all kinds of ways for his shortcomings. It was rumoured that the Channel Fleet was to be sent on active service, and that every man

was to be prepared for the immediate breaking-out of war. And then, instead of his trade, which he thoroughly knew, and in which he was skilful, Roger found himself ignorant of the least details which the youngest boy had at his fingers' ends, and found that grown men do not easily learn new lessons. And then he was devoured with secret remorse for his last treatment of his wife, with bitter regrets at having left his children and his home, and with vain and frantic longings to see them, and hear their voices again. When lying on his back in the agony of sickness, he used in fancy to be mounting the stairs, to see his own clean rooms—his wife putting the last touches to the dinner, and the children, in their pinafores, waiting round the table. He heard their voices welcoming him home; he smelt the geraniums and musk in the windows; and then came the whiffs of salt-water and tar, and the loud roar of the mainsail, as they put about, and he would be called up to some irksome duty, and to rough words and punishment for doing it so ill. All this was bad to bear; and what made it fifty times harder was, that he knew it would not soon come to an end. On, and on, and on, the months seemed to pass in dim procession before him; and still the waves would roll and seethe, the rigging would whistle, the sails flap and roar, the guns rattle in their chains, just as now. What a fool, what a senseless, brainless fool he had been! No Silence now, with her hearty, friendly voice, to welcome him and cheer him up when things went a little crooked, as things in all our lives must sometimes do. No little sensible, fondling lads and lasses pattering round his knee; and as the iron of remorse again and again pierced the depths of his soul, Roger hid his face in his rough hands, and groaned aloud,

Now it chanced that one of the other new recruits on board had been much longer than Charnley a frequent visitor at the Cock and Pin, and, indeed, it may be said that, in that abandoned house, he had made his apprenticeship in vice, and had been turned out a complete and accomplished criminal. Having been joined with a gang of burglars who frequented it, he had been apprehended and condemned to penal servitude for three years; but having comported himself so faultlessly in prison that he had gained his ticket-of-leave, he was now on the world again to commit worse and more daring crimes. For, during those immaculate hours of oakum-picking, when the chaplain, and even the warders, had really thought that Peterson was "profiting by his punishment," and going to begin a fresh course of life, he had, in reality, been exercising his powerful and ingenious mind upon the mistakes he had formerly committed in his robberies, and upon the means of securing future success. There is no manner of doubt, that sitting on an iron bedstead, and picking oakum or coir, may be an admirable vehicle for spiritual thoughts, and for much wholesome meditation for the soul's good. Those beneficial hours of solitude and silence, broken only by the call to exercise, or by the doctor's bell; the Bible, and prayer-book, and hymn-book upon the shelf, with plenty of spare time for study, open the door for reflection and for change of life. And Peterson did study, but, alas! not according to the chaplain's rules. While he was strictly keeping silence, scrupulously cleaning his cell, walking gently out to his exercise, keeping his eyes down in the yard, and walking softly back again with measured steps, the bent head, and the demure physiognomy of a Jesuit novice, the long array

of his past exploits and his evil companions filed before him, and delighted his fancy with their daring plans and their obscene talk. So finished was this specimen of a convict-mind, that while the chaplain was speaking with him, questioning him, and hearing him repeat long passages of Scripture by heart, Peterson could, at the very same time, rehearse all his own dramas, and actually indulge in the foulest language which human depravity can frame or human lips pour forth. And so it came to pass, that badge after badge was gained, many pounds of money were laid by for his future use; and when the shortened term of his punishment had expired, our kind and paternal Government, which takes no heed of disabled labourers or domestic servants worn down by long years of honorable service, had labelled Peterson with an excellent character, and had sent him out into society again with plenty of good clothes, and between four and five pounds of cash, to work his will. And the second night of his release he fell back, as a matter of course, upon the Cock and Pin, got completely drunk, and in that state had enlisted, as Charnley had done.

But no kindly and wholesome thoughts of wife or children were his. Whatever visions of womankind rose up before his eyes, there was not one that was not lost and utterly vile. Sisters he had never had; a mother he had never known. All women to him were such as could be bought for a price, and were comrades and abettors of house-breakers and desperate men. This man kept his eye upon Roger. He saw that he was suffering in body and in mind, and that he was strong, powerful, and resolute. Such a one he wanted for his ends. So, when he now overheard his

deep and heartfelt groans of anguish, he rejoiced, thinking it a good moment to approach and offer him help. "You are ill, mate," he said, with an affectation of seaman's roughness. "Here, taste a drop of this; it will settle your sea-sickness any way."

He held a flask to Charnley's lips, who took a little of the brandy, and then feebly said: "Thank you, thank you! I don't know you; but I am sure you are kind. Can you tell me if there is any chance of our stopping at Plymouth?"

"I'll try and find out. Mebbe there is! But what then, you can't run away you know, at least not without a bullet being put into you, as you go?"

"I want to see my wife, if it is possible, before we quite start," said Roger, very earnestly. "I am sure she is breaking her heart about this."

"Women are always breaking their hearts," growled Peterson; "but they soon mend again! My fine fellow, before you have got half way to the Baltic, or to wherever 'tis we are going, she'll be all right enough, and find another husband, or what'll do as well."

"You're a bad fellow!" shouted Roger, trying to raise himself upright in his wrath. "You don't know what a good wife is, if you say such things."

"Neither good nor bad, my lad, you may swear to that," replied Peterson, with a light, mocking laugh. "So don't you go and fall out of bed for any such matter as that, but let us be friends. Come, now, I was only trying to comfort you a bit, and you take it all upside down."

"I ask your pardon, mate," replied poor Roger, humbly. "I was put out like; for you see, my heart is sore as sore can be, and that rumples up the best of tempers."

"Say no more about it, lad!" said Peterson, glad enough to sooth his companion. "Come, now, you'll know Jeff Peterson when you see him again, won't you, and call him a friend and well-wisher? Why, man, I'm as sorry as you can be for having enlisted,—and I mean to do whatever man can to get out of the scrape! But gently for a bit. Take all things easy till we can make 'em easy for ourselves. That's my plan in life."

So, bit by bit, Peterson wound himself cunningly into Roger, brought him brandy and rum on the sly for his sickness, showed him the ways of the ship, and the places and names of things, and stood between him and any rougher bit of work than his strength, now reduced, was equal to; and in so many ways showed him kindness and help, that though Roger did not, as he owned to himself, "cotton to the chap at all," he could not for very shame help being on friendly terms, and acknowledging all that Peterson had done for him. And as he—being so admirably trained in the highest of all normal schools for hypocrisy and humbug, *viz.*, penal servitude in Her Majesty's prisons—conducted himself well and soberly, and with great respect, on board the ship, no one thought it necessary to warn Charnley that his chosen comrade was a ticket-of-leave. Alas! how often it is that others, like him, have walked nearer and nearer to the edge of a precipice, *unwarned, because it is no man's business to warn*, and finally, when no one is by to hinder, step over it and are lost. It is a cruel cowardice, a base fear, which is continually crying out, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Peterson, as well as Charnley, became more exciteable and communicative as the *Osprey* neared Plymouth. They had had the roughest weather all down the Channel; and ever since they had lost sight of the *Needles*,

the wind had freshened to a regular gale. Sail was shortened, everything stowed, the lights closed, and all made snug to meet a stormy night, when Peterson and Charnley were sent to coil some rope on the forecastle. Here, under cover of the whistling and hissing sea, which drenched them at every plunge of the ship, Peterson began to talk in a low voice to his companion.

"Old boy," he said, "you hav'nt forgot your wife and children?"

"Don't Peterson! They are never out of my mind. And we are getting very near to Plymouth now!"

"That we are! In a day or two will be our last sight and touch of Old England, perhaps for years."

"What then?" doggedly asked Roger, who almost gnashed his teeth as he said it.

"What then? Well, it's pleasant enough for me, a poor lonely devil, as hasn't a living dog to care for him. But what must it be for you, with a good wife and pretty brats, as you say, to love you up!"

"What's the good of talking this way?" asked Charnley, fiercely turning on his tormentor.

"Well, it may be good, and it may not," coolly replied Peterson, coiling down an end of rope with great neatness. "But perhaps you don't care now whether you land or not, and whether ——"

"Whether?" asked Roger, breathlessly leaning forward, as if to catch the least breath out of his comrade's mouth.

"Whether you *escape*, I was going to say," replied Peterson, watching his companion's eyes. "Look you, Charnley, if you are not an idiot and a donkey, and I can depend on you for not flinching, I can put you up to as good a chance ——"

"Forward!" shouted the officer on duty; "fo'castle, forward! Coil down the ropes, and brace up the jib; reef the foresail—reef! About ship!"

And in the rush and rattle, and roar and plunge of tacking in the furious gale, all further words and plans, and thoughts even, were drowned and lost.

But Charnley had hold of a clue to some of Peterson's words, and he never rested till he had seized another opportunity of a private talk with him. Neither was the other disinclined; and they met that very night again, when the ship was rushing forward with mad plunges, under the smallest spread of sail, and the water pouring in torrents of foam over the decks. Holding on by the safety lines, and with hats firmly bound down, the two men again met, and Peterson made known his scheme. He hesitated at the final revelation, solely for fear his companion should flinch; for little as it was to him, he knew that murder would stagger Charnley. And thus, by little and little, by the thoughts of freedom, by the recollections of home, by the ardent love of wife and child, by the horrors of separation and distance for unknown years, did he link together the manifold chain which was to drag him over the edge of the precipice, and into the abyss that was hidden as yet from his eyes.

## C H A P T E R   V I .



HE Cock and Pin was not let on lease. It was rented quarterly; and the owner was quite willing it should change hands. He was a little ashamed of the reputation it bore; but, after all, he said, a public-house is a public-house: as he was a brewer, he was bound to have public-houses; and the more trade they drove the better for him. But anyways, if gentlemen were taking the matter up, it was no credit to him to have one of his houses disorderly; and if it paid the rent, that was what he looked to. He did not want *a noise*.

And so, as Rokewode said, that great cowardly Tycoon, the sole legislative and executive power left in the country, Public Opinion, gave the death-stroke to the Cock and Pin.

He agreed to take the house the next quarter, at a rent somewhat higher, on account of its ceasing to swell the brewer's income by an annual absorption of highly-drugged beer and spirits; and notice was given to the landlord of the arrangement.

But the Dining-hall's Committee demurred; and Mrs. Walmesley felt a little anxious, for she knew that Rokewode had undertaken the rent. And then there was Silence Charnley, too, still scraping a scanty maintenance by taking in washing. She could not go out and leave all the children to play in the gutters, or fall

into the fire. The family, however, it was firmly believed, chiefly rested on Dr. Harley's shoulders; though when Mrs. Walmesley taxed him with it, he said it was an impertinent curiosity. And then, Miss Turvile took Hester and David into the Home, which Dr. Harley declared was nothing short of the tent of the Fairy Peribaneu, that either folded up in your hand, or sheltered an army, just according as it was wanted.

Mrs. Halliwell did all that a neighbour could do in helping Silence, whether in washing, cleaning, or cooking. Many a dish did she carry upstairs, in plate or basin, remarking that she had too bright a little fire, or too many potatoes, or missed her weight of the meat, or put on too much broth; in short, to hear her, you would have thought that she had certainly addled her brains, and that her housekeeping was, as they say in the north, all gone astraught. But one day when she put down a good bowl of soup, remarking, as usual, that she had set on too much broth, Silence quietly turned to her, with her shadowy smile, and said: "I tell you what, dear sister, *it is the heart that is too much, and not the broth!*" So, aftert hat, Mrs. Halliwell wisely held her peace, feeling, as Yankees say, shut up.

About this time, there were many prayers and recommendations to the Sorrowful Heart.

One day, Dr. Harley and Rokewode met at his chambers in the Temple, and went together into the wilds of London, even penetrating to Bethnal-green, and Columbia-square, where Dr. Harley first learnt what was the true nature of co-operative societies, and was so struck with what he heard, that he proposed to Roke-wode to leave London by an early train on the next Saturday, and go into the North of England till Monday;

which they both did, and came back very much the wiser for their journey. They then went to work in earnest with gentlemen of their acquaintance; and a committee of practical, painstaking men were formed, who did not look upon the work as a deliberate amusement, to take up and lay down, but as life-work, to be steadily carried on through rain and sunshine, and for year after year. And at last the Dining-hall's Committee came to an anchor, and decided on co-operating with the Reading-room Committee, and opening a hall at the Cock and Pin. For this purpose, when Roke-wode's quarter began, a range of premises at the back was thrown into two long, spacious rooms, which were soon fitted up in a suitable manner, lighted by ample windows of the skylight kind, with thick, rolled glass let into the roof. The rooms were cheerfully painted, and presented a very pleasing effect. The two adjoining rooms, in the house itself, were cleared out as a reading-room, and fitted with plain book-shelves of varnished deal. A long narrow table of the same stood in the middle of the room, to be covered with newspapers and periodicals. Over the chimney-piece was placed a beautiful print of the crucifixion, with St. John and St. Mary Magdalene, and underneath, on a large scroll: "This is what I have done for thee. What hast thou done for Me?" Under it was a good cast of Pius IX., and on the same side of the room large prints of the Queen and Prince Albert. The book-shelves soon contained a fair library of the lives of holy men and women, history, practical science, accounts of trades, manufactures, popular poetry, and good novels. It was not to be supposed that men would go into company to read devotional books, so that in the reading-room none were

provided; but in a locked bookcase apart, there was a solid and useful selection for lending, which was under Mr. Clifford's charge. In the same bookcase were a number of Testaments, prayer-books, and hymn-books for sale, with a supply of crucifixes, rosaries, and medals. Alongside of the door of the reading-room, was that of a little smoking-room, taken out of the bar. In this there was nothing but a table and chairs, with a couple of spittoons. A good print or two hung on the walls. The frontage rooms were reserved for the Co-operative Society and its future goods; upstairs it was necessary to find houseroom for the matron, sub-matron, and clerk of the Dining-Hall; and for the two latter it was proposed to find a married couple, which, as Mrs. Charnley was to take the responsibility of the office, it was not difficult to do. An elderly man, with a quiet, respectable wife, having one son doing for himself, were engaged; and thus the chief members of the staff were provided.

Mrs. Walmesley went backwards and forwards till the soles of her feet ached, fetching and carrying, settling, arranging, and advising; and even Silence Charnley's pale face was lit up by the only brightness that ever visited it now—the shadowy smile, which seemed to fade before it dawned; but the beautiful calm of inward rest had settled there a peace that man and the works of man had not made, and could never mar. Alice Charnley was to go to Miss Turvile as one of the Home-maids, so there were only Leonard and little Joseph with their mother. Leonard was so natty and useful, that Dr. Harley declared he should, after all, fall into the weakness of a Buttons, and hire him as his page; but Silence could not reconcile herself to parting with her youngest pair, the babies that had been of late years the most noticed and

caressed by her husband; besides, it was upon their prayers, daily and nightly uttered in the treble lisp of babyhood, that she chiefly reckoned for being heard. She knew it was wrong, she said, to herself, but in her own deep mind she could not help putting the prayers of these mites of boys before all others. She thought their angels, unoffended as yet by any act of sin, would more eagerly echo their words, and plead more earnestly for them at God's throne: and who can blame her, or say she was wrong? Neither could any one see the mother kneel before the crucifix, with the two babies in their little night-gowns beside her, and not say that she used the most touching means on earth to gain her end

The Dining-hall and Reading-room were "inaugurated" on Michaelmas Day. Mr. Barrow and Mr. Clifford, Sir Tichborne Weston, the new heir of a very old property, active and eager for work; Mr. Selby, Mr. Fynes, and Mr. Pinnock, members of the Dining Halls' Committee; Rokewode Walmesley, and several Templars, Dr. Harley, and a few of his best friends; Mrs. Walmesley, and a bevy of ladies, both useful and ornamental, were all gathered in the largest of the dining-rooms. Near the tables, in a neat uniform of grey linsey, with the whitest of aprons and little caps, were ranged the waiters—waiters feminine—so well drilled and instructed, that they all looked as if the sergeant were present, and had just called out, in his loudest voice: "Attention, waitresses, if you please!" At the top of the room the sub-matron and clerk wore an excited and important air, as if the whole government of the world rested on their two pair of shoulders; while dear Silence Charnley, the only calm one of all that assembly, went backwards and forwards from the kitchen to the tables, to see that everything was in its right place.

The porter, with one hand suspended in the air, was ready to take the tickets; and, in short, the whole company was exactly the counterpart of that described in the fairy tale of Rosebud, where every one waits expectant for the touch of a wand to dissolve the enchantment.

Mr. Barrow was the enchanter. His genial face, spectacled and joyous even more than usual, now appeared above the crowd on a little platform. He spoke, as was his wont, a few words in a clear voice, and just what it was necessary to say. He congratulated his own people first (because it was for their good it was set on foot), upon the opening of the Dining Hall. They could now secure ample meals of wholesome food, at a price within every one's reach. They had a reading-room, in which they could spend portions of their evenings, light, comfortable, and pleasant, so that now they had no excuse for frequenting the public-houses. It rested with themselves to keep up what had been set going. It was not to be bolstered up by donations and petting, *it was to be honestly supported by themselves*. They were grown men, reasonable creatures, not babies in arms. They had had evil, the evil of an infamous house, before their eyes for many years. Now, thank God! that public-house no longer existed, and in its stead was raised up a house of blessing, a house of usefulness, a house of help to all who choose to help themselves. What had been the curse of that house formerly, he could not trust himself to say, and he knew they would not wish to hear; but as there were some of the sufferers among them, deeply honoured and respected, they could tell, if needs be, the sad tale. What that house might now become, in the way of blessings, rested with themselves. He hoped, he had confidence, that they would choose the good, and resist the evil,

henceforth. He would also congratulate the gentlemen, one and all, and all of them together, upon the good they had so nobly laboured to bring about, and thank them, in the name of his parish, and that of all the neighbourhood round. As to the ladies, he really could not thank *them*, for he knew the truth of the old proverb—

“Man he works till set of sun,  
But woman’s work is never done.”

And at that rate his thanks would never be done, and then they would never get to their dinner, which he wanted to see them eat. So with their leave he would, on this first day of their joyful meeting, conclude by saying grace.

All heads were instantly uncovered, and nearly all hands made the sign of the cross. It was a good sight, and one that thrilled more than one of the lookers-on with reverent joy.

Then all tongues were loosed, and the laughing and talking broke out like sunshine through the hall. The ticket-holders gave up their tickets on taking their places, and were soon absorbed in the bowls of soup, or broth, which opened the feast. At the end of the room, on this occasion, was placed a cross-table, at which all the ladies and gentlemen sat down to exactly the same fare as was provided for the rest of the party. Abundant praise and congratulation were showered upon the parish-priest for his excellent oration, which Sir Tichborne told him was the best he had ever heard; and he wished he might get any so good during the next session of Parliament. And there was a cross-fire of wit and jokes kept up between the Dining-hall’s Committee and the Templars, which would have made the fortune of any “serial”

writer who was hard-up for table-talk. But it so happened that the only writer present, and he was a well-known one, was hard-up for nothing, like a true Berkshire man, and was rattling out his jokes, and epigrams, and sparkling wit, in a way good to witness; and Mrs. Wal-mesley was so busy laughing at and with him, and Dr. Harley was so busy doing the agreeable to three ladies at once, that the dinner or *déjeuner* was nearly over before either spoke to the other. In a moment's pause, he said to her, across the table: "Is it good? is it much?" And she answered: "It is good, *gooder*, *best*; and almost too much."

And Rokewode seized the same opportunity of sending her a flower in a glass, and with a message by the little waitress (one of Mr. Barrow's school-girls), asking her to take wine with him. She bent forward, and their eyes met; but when the mother put down her glass, she found that she must swallow two tears besides her wine.

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## CHAPTER VII.

AFTER a sharp and dangerous night, the Osprey at last ran into Plymouth Harbour. Several of her sticks had been carried away, and her gear was so loosened that she wanted a little time to look herself over. Something was also the matter with the wheel. Whatever the other passengers or hands on board might feel, there were two

hearts at least that beat quicker on finding out this. Roger's desire to see Silence and the children once more had become almost ungovernable, while Peterson's plan had become an iron resolve, that, cost what it would, his own life, or any number of the lives of others, he would escape. Roger's restlessness was honestly and openly expressed; Peterson's face was as changeless as a steel mask. So well, indeed, had he simulated throughout, that he was sent with a couple of others on shore, to fetch off sundry things that were wanted. He weighed and calculated his chances, supposing he could knock one of the sailors on the head with an oar; but he argued that broad daylight, and a crowded harbour, would not forward his plans, and that, if he should be laid in irons, all chance would be over. He went, therefore, and returned, as quietly and as orderly as a trained man-of-war's man should; and, on his coming on board, overheard a good report of himself to the officer on duty. He sought Roger, and told him to catch the attention of the surgeon, and to ask him to intercede that he might be sent on shore, if only once, before they sailed on a longer voyage. Charnley did so, and, as he had conducted himself well, he got a favorable hearing. He was generally liked, too, for the manly way he had borne his sufferings, and his ready good-humour to all on board. So the surgeon said to the lieutenant now left on duty, that if there was any shore-work, he hoped Charnley might have his turn, for he had suffered a great deal, and was also bearing his trouble like a man.

Very soon an opportunity occurred. It was in the dusk of a gloomy evening that Peterson, Charnley, and two more, with an officer and a middy, were sent to bring off some stores, and, especially some wine for an officer

who had just joined, and who lived in the neighbourhood. The hearts of the two men bounded fiercely on seeing themselves face to face in the boat; and before they handled their oars and sat down, a meaning look passed between them. On some pretence, Peterson managed not to be left in the boat; and he soon found means to range alongside of Charnley and gripe his hand. The officer, Lieutenant Rose, a genial, fine-looking young man, kept Charnley chiefly with him, for, as has been said, he was a favourite, and was superior to most of the men. The stores were gradually selected, and the two sailors were loaded with the wine. During their visits to various shops, Peterson snatched up a hammer unseen by any one, and thrust it into his sleeve. It was nearly dark, and a thick, drizzling rain began to fall when the lieutenant turned his steps towards the harbour. As they came into a long, narrow, crooked street, Peterson lagged behind, apparently overcome with violent cramps. Charnley, at first believing it real, stopped, and offered to relieve him of part of his load. Just then the two sailors reached the crook in the street, and turned out of sight. "Now!" exclaimed Peterson, in a hoarse whisper, and he flew at the officer with hammer upraised, and dealt him a hideous blow on the head, which, to Charnley's horror, felled him bleeding to the ground, and then throwing down the stores he carried, and seizing Charnley by the arm, rushed like lightning back to the top of the street, and turned into a narrow, deserted court. "Run!" he cried, in the same hoarse voice, to Charnley—"run for your life, boy, if you want to save it! I can get to cover anywhere, but you are such a Jack in the green! Run, I say!" All that he wanted was to separate Charnley from himself, knowing that he would

be the one most likely to be caught. While saying these few words, and under cover of the thick darkness, he dexterously thrust the hammer into the pocket of Roger's pea-jacket, and disappeared. Charnley, horror-struck and confused, scarcely knowing yet whether that sudden deed had been really done, or was only a hideous dream, ran out of the court, and was soon beyond the tangled maze of narrow streets, reaching the outskirts of the town. But where was he to go—what was he to do? He had not a farthing of money, and London was many miles away. And in these days of detectives and telegraphs, how could he hope to escape? And then a dim and terrible dread settled down upon him like ice. If he were taken—was it not better a thousand times to have gone to sea, and to have renounced his wife and children for the time—to have written to her to keep up her heart, and look forward to the future, than that she should hear of him as— A shuddering horror prevented him from finishing his thought. Were his card-playing, "cheerful glass," his resistance to grace, and the repeated warnings of Mr. Barrow and Dr. Harley, his evening or two at the Cock and Pin, to end in—**MURDER?**

All this time he was walking on fast, fast, running when he could do it without exciting observation, and still feeling the wild hope and excitement every escaped man must feel, thinking that after all he might somehow get his liberty and begin life again. He might go to France, and write to Silence to join him, or to America. He could work his way. But down, then, came the icy thought—that blank, paralysing dread—Was that blow fatal? Was it murder? And still, for ever rising up through the thick curtain of rain and darkness, came the bright young face, the springy step,

the sudden blow, and the prostrate bleeding body lying on the ground.

And still he walked, and ran, and flew along, to get nearer to Silence and his children, and further away from that dreadful sight; but, however it might be, and whether he lagged or ran, there went with him the same vision still, the same ghastly, bleeding vision, which seemed to pursue him ever, evermore.

And when he came to a railway-station, miles from Plymouth, a strange sight smote the eyes of a group of gentlemen on the platform, who were waiting for the night express to go up to London. It was a haggard, wan, and ghastly man, stained and splashed by many-coloured soils, asking for the police that he might give himself up to justice. It was so strange a tale, that one of these gentlemen, a neighbouring magistrate, thought he must be an escaped maniac, and gave him, as such, in charge to two of the rural police on duty for the night. But before the express was due, flash, flash, along the wires came the mystic message, that a murder had been committed at Plymouth, and that the murderers had escaped. So the same magistrate made out a warrant for commitment for trial on suspicion: and Roger Charnley, handcuffed, was locked up in the police-station for the night.

But then the ghastly vision left him; and, as he slept a troubled and broken sleep, he saw the face of his wife, and heard the two little round-faced boys praying on their knees.

## CHAPTER VIII.

HE sharp, rapid sound of the warden's key turned in the lock of the outer grate, the bolt was drawn, and Dr. Harley was let into Charnley's cell. The trial was over, and the sentence given—*penal servitude for life*. And this was the mitigation of mercy, solely on account of the single doubt whether Charnley struck the fatal blow himself, or was only an accomplice in the act. No one saw the deed; and the hammer, covered with freshly-dried blood, was found upon him. There were only the other facts, that his companion was a noted ticket-of-leave, not yet apprehended, and that Charnley had given himself up to justice, and had solemnly and repeatedly declared himself guiltless of the murder, describing always, in the same minute way, as if every detail of the tragedy was burned into his brain, the circumstances that we know. Under this faint doubt, coupled with attestations of the strongest kind to his previous good character, the judge accepted the recommendation to mercy, and mitigated the sentence of death to *penal servitude for life*.

Roger was sitting on his iron bedstead, leaning his head on his hand; but he looked up with something like joy as Dr. Harley's well-known face appeared. He closed the wooden door, and sat down beside the prisoner.

"This is good of you, sir," said Roger, in a choked voice. He seemed afraid to ask after Silence.

"I saw your wife this morning, Charnley. She is as well as you can expect. Better, indeed, than when she knew nothing, and was in continual suspense. I want to have a little serious talk with you, and I am very glad that I have for some months visited this particular prison, as now I can see you from time to time."

"Do you visit the men here, sir? Oh! I am gladder than I can say."

"Yes, and I am glad, too. But now I want you to tell me, in a few words, one or two things, which judges and juries are very slow in getting at—*Did you murder that poor young Lieutenant Rose?*"

"God forbid, sir. Indeed I did not," solemnly answered Roger.

"Very good; I thought so. Who did it?"

"Peterson struck him on the head, sir, with that hammer that was found on me."

"How did it get into your pocket?"

"He must have put it in, sir, when we were in the dark court, after the murder. I never felt him touch me at all; but they have told me many things of him since, sir, that have opened my eyes. They say he was the daringest burglar in London, and known to all the police."

"Were you aware that he was a ticket-of-leave?"

"Indeed I was not, sir, or I should have been on my guard, I do believe. I thought he had always been a sailor."

"How did he get hold of that hammer?"

"I don't know, sir, from Adam. Whether he took it with him from the ship, or out of a shop, as we went

about, I can't say the least. I never knew he had it till he caught it out of his sleeve, and flew at Lieutenant Rose." And as the scene again rose up before him, Roger shuddered with horror.

Dr. Harley observed him a little while attentively, and then noted down several things in his pocket-book.

"When you left the ship that day, what was your idea?" he said, after a pause.

"We both, Peterson and I, intended to cut and run, sir: that was *my* idea, at least. I never gave a thought to murdering any one, or doing any one any harm; though, certainly, if any of them had chased me, I should have given them as good blows as I could, for I was *desperate* to get back to ——."

"Did Peterson arrange it with you beforehand?"

"Oh yes, sir; we talked many a time over it, and he was always asking of me to remember my wife . . . and children . . . and reminding me that we were near Plymouth, and our last chance; and I was egged on by that talk, and the constant thought of *them*, and became like desperate and mad to get ashore, if only for a few hours; and Peterson advised me to speak to the surgeon, and I believe he asked the officers to let me have my turn on shore, because I had been very ill. I was a fool not to bear what I had. If I had the time over again, I would go round the world sooner than make up with any one to break out. But there is no more chance now."

The tears fell down his weather-worn cheeks and long beard, now, by a few days of grief and dread, thickly streaked with grey. Dr. Harley was silent for a few moments. His voice was choked.

"Charnley," he said, "you have no need for me to preach to you; I could not do it if I would, for you .

know, as well as I do, what brought you here. It does not matter whether you were justly sentenced according to law—it is just before God."

"It is, sir; you are right. I was thinking that when you came in."

"And you know why, too," continued Dr. Harley. "You know that you were thoroughly warned, and were perfectly aware what risks you ran, and the wickedness of doing what you did. You had taken an oath against cards and spirits, and you broke your oath; you rushed into mortal sin; you sought the company that was your devil, and abused your good, true-hearted wife for keeping you out of it. Such a wife few men are blessed with; and at times you have treated her like a dog: and as you looked out for bad company, God gave you what you wished, and let you taste the fruits of it for yourself. You *know* that I am telling you the truth."

"It is true, as true as Gospel," replied Roger, sadly.

"Then now, for the present, give yourself up to your sentence, and bear it like a man. Make the best of it, and do not throw it away. Whether any change may be made by Peterson's apprehension, I cannot tell yet; but meanwhile do you *pray and repent*—you have plenty to be sorry for."

Then he took the prisoner by the hand, and said, with the fullest tenderness of his expressive voice:

"Courage, my good fellow, till I see you again! Fare you well."

From the prison gates Dr. Harley drove to the Home Secretary's office, and was for some time closeted with the Director of the prison. Sharp and keen as steel, clear and lucid as glass, and colourless as glass from bias or prejudice, was the mind of the man to whom he spoke,

and who compared his own notes with those made by Dr. Harley in the prison. Not an indication escaped him, not a circumstance of feather-weight but was valued; and when the work was done, he said so, and signified that his time must be given elsewhere. It must be owned that the pair were well matched for doing business.

It was refreshing, though not unmixed with sadness, to walk into Mrs. Walmesley's drawing-room that evening, and find there the constant friends who were always ready to help or to sympathise. Rokewode left his sonata unfinished, and, jumping up, asked :

“ Is there any hope? Can anything be done? ”

“ Not immediately; but I hope;—” replied Dr. Harley, sitting down wearily in his usual arm-chair. Then he added to Mrs. Walmesley: “ This is so unlike the prison. That kind of work really tries one's nerves; those nerves which I once so scoffed at.”

“ Yes,” she replied, smiling, “ whatever we mock at comes back to visit us with retributive vengeance. But now all that you want is a good cup of tea.” She rang the bell. “ And for the rest,” she added, as she was putting the tea into the tea-pot, “ I have faith in Silence and the children's prayers.”

“ You are right, there,” replied the Doctor, yielding to the magic of that calm and refreshing peace which seemed to hang round Mrs. Walmesley. “ And after tea, if you are not too tired, let us forget everything in a good pitched battle.”

So again they fell to, and slew one another's knights and bishops, till, like the Kilkenny cats, there was nothing left on the board but the two kings.

## CHAPTER IX.



ROGER bore his punishment like a man. His hair and beard were close cut; he was dressed in coarse brown uniform; he was locked within stout oak plank and iron grating. Little light came through the round holes of his thick window, and little had he to do that required light. When he went out in the court to carry coals, or coke, or bales of canvass, an officer followed him with a loaded carbine, as if he were a beast of prey; and when it was time for exercise in the yard, he walked round and round, as horses grind in a mill, and other convicts walked round and round before and after; so that, to a thoughtful eye, they looked like souls in punishment, whose dreadful doom it is to do the same useless, aimless, monotonous thing for ever and for evermore.

And when the hour struck, his piece of tin, which served as a knife, was given him through the wall, and the can of water was thrust in at the door—the same food and the same drink; and robbed by its sameness even of the power to nourish, which made that too, as well as the work and the exercise, seem the same dreadful doom of carrying on a useless, aimless, monotonous life for ever and for evermore.

Thus the hours spread out into days, and the days lagged to weeks, and the weeks and months grew into a long lifetime; but still Roger bore it well, and braced

his heart with prayer and deep sorrow, and learned what it is to trust in God, and in no other, and that grace is always enough to resist temptation, if a man so wills. He spent his chief spare time in studying one book—the little Testament, that was always laid, with the Garden of the Soul, on his shelf. And now that all the world was shut out, the great and solemn beauty of the mysteries of faith opened to his eyes. He pored over the journey to Bethlehem, the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, and the coming of the Kings, as if he had never known that such things were. Now it seemed as if he saw them all, lived with them, took part in them, learned from them what they were intended to teach, and practised the lessons. He learned to know his Lord and Saviour; and, by knowing, to love Him dearly, and to determine to live and die serving Him to the end. Then he knew what it was to grieve Him by mortal sin; and he wondered over his own life, his own blindness, and his own escapes, with a wonder which deepened and widened every day.

And then he blessed God for his trial and condemnation to this place. It looked like hell, but it was a true purgatory to him. Meanwhile, outside of the double walls, and the bolts and bars, in the fresh air and bright sunshine, Silence was bearing the punishment as well. The faithful wife served up the meals, and attended to the wants of all-comers to the Dining-hall, made all clean and bright, saved the sub-matron and the light-hearted girls all the trouble she could, and bore all the burthens of life on her sore heart with a calm face and loving eyes. Every one wondered at her; but they did not see how all was done in faith for Roger. And each morning before the work began, and each night when the work

was done, the mother and her boys knelt down to pray "for father."

Nor they alone. Mrs. Walmesley took counsel of Sister Lettice, and she of Mr. Barrow; and every Sunday, before the image of Our Lady of Sorrows, extra prayers were said for a family of members in great trouble; and then the drowsiest and most nodding among the aged waked up and prayed aloud, rocking to and fro the while, recommending these well-known and much loved mourners to the Sorrowful Heart.

Silence had now no easy place, for the Hall was thronged with visitors, not only for regular dinners and breakfasts, but for luncheons, bowls of broth and soup, plates of cold meat, and cups of coffee at all times. Clerks and shopmen, and men of business of all degrees, found out where good luncheons of wholesome food were to be had, and came to get them. The quantity of provisions needed for the supplies gave the Hall an interest with wealthy tradesmen, and there was an emulation to furnish what was required. The whole neighbourhood roused itself for good; eating-house keepers, and publicans, and cook-shops learned to know that it would not do now to feed their customers on diseased meat sandwiches and sausages, sawdusted coffee, and tobacco-drugged beer. They grew ashamed of their unwashed, grimy, stuffy eating-rooms. There was a general wakening-up to improvement, and progress, and liberal conduct, which was refreshing to see.

The Reading-room worked a deeper good. Men came first for the light and warmth, and smoking, then for the penny newspapers and pictures, and then for reading and knowledge. Rokewode Walmesley went once a-week to read aloud, and talk about what was

read. He found that great interest was excited by short readings in English history, and that this would pave the way to lectures and classes. Dr. Harley supplied prints and lithographs, which were pinned on a black-board as required, and very soon some of the younger men asked for a lecture-room. An upstairs-room was opened temporarily, and it was nearly always full. Then Dr. Harley came and took turn with short lectures on social subjects—the use of air and cleanliness, the common-sense of various sciences, and popular principles of knowledge necessary to trades and manufactures. A friend of Dr. Harley's, who had been a great deal abroad, gave a series of short descriptions of places in the Holy Land, with views. That led to old Scripture history, and to the plants and animals used as illustrations or figures in the Scriptures. And thence a request for some natural history in general, plants, trees, and animals. Every fresh subject spread a fresh interest, and the men began to read eagerly upon such as had been spoken about. And those who could not read, lamented their loss, and cried out for a Night School.

Then Mrs. Walmesley went upstairs to another room, three nights in the week, and taught a small adult class for an hour. This was the hardest work of all that was ever done there; and of course it was a woman who did it.

One night in every week, half an hour at least was taken up by a kind of conversational board of mixed inquiry and business, when the Sick Guild rose up into being, and then into strength, and then into a value and importance which made the parish-priest bless the day that Dr. Harley first started the idea. At those times the cases were looked into, the subscriptions paid into a

box, and the payments made out to the sick members as their turns came round. Over this board, Dr. Harley reigned supreme; and, without noise or effort, stilled all clamour, and crushed growing evils with his strong, kindly hand.

And now came the final development of that renowned Institution which reigned in place of the Cock and Pin. A few gentlemen and substantial tradesmen, of whom Manson was one, formed themselves into a Co-operative Union, and began to trade. Flour, rice, tea, coffee, and sugar, soap and candles, were bought and stored in the lower rooms, and sold at wholesale prices, or a little above. As it was expected, this raised a hideous clamour in all the shops around. Dire were the threats and dire the omens of coming war. And then it was that Rokewode acknowledged how wise had been the policy which began with what appealed to the reason, and feelings, and knowledge of all, before starting what bore on its face a shadow of injustice. The institution was by this time too firmly-rooted and settled to be overthrown by clamour. "These gentlemen have done us too much good to wish to do any one harm," was the general verdict; and it was acted upon. Roke-wode gave a short lecture on the nature of co-operative work, showing how easy it is, with combined resources, to economise and multiply means. He clearly pointed out the great principles of combination—the buying largely at wholesale price, instead of in retail dribblets; and how capital thus husbanded, reproduces capital, and in time doubles and trebles itself. And then he made known to them the secret of the return of so much in the pound to all customers at the year's end, got out of that very multiplication of capital, and ended, after a

short table of wholesale and retail prices, by saying that the society hoped, at the year's end, to return 1s. 8d. or 2s. in the pound to all customers who chose to buy steadily during that year. Upon this declaration, all demurs vanished. Bright faces and hearty thanks were seen and moved on all sides; and the mutiny broke up with a good number of names placed on the books.

It will be satisfactory to those who have no faith in "schemes," and who think, as they say in Brittany, "what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us"—that the Co-operative Society grew and flourished, and, beginning with a handful in a corner, it spread through several parishes, and became a blessing to good housewives and their families, and to the husbands, who "win the bread."

One night, when no one looked for it, and a number of the men were reading, or playing at chess and back-gammon, Manson came into the Reading-room, in great excitement, with the broad *Times* sheet in his hand, which he took straight up to Dr. Harley, who was just then going away. The excitement was immediately communicated to him, and he passed on the paper to Rokewode Walmesley, who had just come in to give a lecture. What could there be in that paper? Rokewode hastily excused himself to the men, and he and Dr. Harley went out together.

"Mamma, darling!" he cried, as they got into her drawing-room, "guess what has happened! Peterson has been taken at last, and has confessed to the murder of Lieutenant Rose!"

"Thank God!" she said, fervently; and, after a pause of silent prayer, she continued—"Is it really true? I knew it would come some time: but is it really now?"

"Yes," replied Dr. Harley, "it certainly must be true, for it is in the second edition of the *Times*." But now, what is to be done about Silence?"

"Could you go to the Home Office to-morrow morning and inquire?" asked Mrs. Walmesley. "It would be shocking, if it should not be true, to have raised her hopes."

"That is what I will do," said Dr. Harley; "and to-night we will rest and be thankful."

"But will Charnley be let off?" asked Rokewode. "He was an accomplice, was he not?"

"No," replied Dr. Harley, laying the broad sheet of the "Voice of the World" flat on the table. "Look, this is what is said: 'confessed to having been the *sole planner and executor of the death of the late unfortunate Lieutenant Rose.*' He was taken in a highway robbery and attempt to murder, it seems, at Manchester, and is now lying for trial there at the Old Bailey."

Little else was said by any of the party. They all felt that prayer had been answered; and when Dr. Harley said a word or two to Mrs. Walmesley of this kind, shortly before bidding her good night, she answered in a low voice: "'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.' But I never saw it so realised before."

\* \* \* \* \*

Roger's sentence was revoked by the Home Secretary, upon the clear and positive confession of Peterson before his trial. He had never cared for, or thought of Charnley's sufferings hitherto, but now that he was trapped himself, they were of no further use to him; and in the same cool way that he had carried out all his crimes, he

committed his one act of tardy reparation, and then hung himself with his handkerchief in his cell.

Words can never express what Roger and Silence felt on the evening of his coming home. The long aching was over, and there was peace and rest, too solemn and deep for words or much joy. He was lost, and was found. She fell on his neck, and was folded to his heart. True and faithful in the hours of temptation and trial, she now reaped her rich reward. And he looked upon her with loving and deep reverence, and gathered the children silently into his arms.

That night there was service in the church, and all the members of the Guild of the Sorrowful Heart met in thanksgiving. If many tears were shed, they were tears of joy, for, like one family, they had prayed, and, like one family, now rejoiced over the sinner that was lost and found, as the manifest answer to prayer.

## APPENDIX.

It is a singular coincidence that, while the sheets of these tales (written some months since) have been passing through the press, an excellent article on the co-operative movement has appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of October, 1864. The summary there made of the chief points of the system is so ably drawn up, that advantage has been taken of it to condense certain facts, which would have been cumbrous in the text, into this appendix.

The whole story of the co-operative movement is one of the highest interest and value to all observers of social progress. Those who have watched it in the North of England must needs be more or less at home in its principles and details; but there are still many to whom, unfortunately, its labours are unknown. And it is a marvellous fact that, although the sufferings of our London poor are so manifold and aggravated from the unsatisfactory state and conditions of retail trade, they are the very last to take in hand the remedy that is looking them in the face.

The co-operative principle, then, starts on the basis that *the Labourer is the real Capitalist*, which, if it can be worked out into practice, goes far to annihilate all strife between Capital and Labour henceforth. The keenest-sighted students of social questions have, indeed, always upheld this principle, and it will probably be found that in this, as in many other instances, the widest and largest view will prove also the most practical one in the end.

However this may be, what we have at present to deal with is the working of the principles laid down. In Rochdale and other places, where the co-operative societies were first estab-

lished, a number of shareholders subscribe and pay, say five per cent. on the deposits, and at the periodical division of the profits of the business, whether shop, manufacture, or otherwise, the shareholders, the labourers employed, and the reserve fund, all receive their portions.

The plan was started in 1844, exactly twenty years ago, when forty flannel-weavers, each subscribing 2d. a-week, raised £28 to trade with, and registered themselves as the "Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers." This was the mustard-seed germ, which, at the present time, has developed into 800 societies, 100,000 members, and over £1,000,000 of capital.

The societies do not now confine themselves to mere distribution of goods or shopkeeping. They also produce. They possess flour, cotton, and woollen mills, farms, and cottages. They make clothes, hats, and shoes. They preclude themselves from banking, mining, brewing, and distilling.

Whatever may or may not be their success in *production*, that in *distribution* is clear, solid, and palpable to the most prejudiced or superficial observer. The co-operative stores are well worth a visit, especially when thronged with the Saturday nights' customers. There is no credit, no debts, no interest on locked-up capital. The goods are of the very best, because the stocks belong to the buyers themselves. As it has been said ("Self-help for the People") they "buy in the market like millionaires, and as far as pureness of food goes, live like lords. They are weaving their own stuffs, making their own shoes, sewing their own garments, and grinding their own corn. They buy the purest sugar and the best tea, and grind their own coffee. They slaughter their own cattle. They have but one duty to perform—that of giving fair measure, full weight, and a pure article."

Every member owns his portion of the capital absolutely. He begins, as has been said, by taking a certain number of shares (at Rochdale, five), paying for them by weekly subscription, or at a time fixed by his own convenience. He

receives 5 per cent. interest for the invested money. If he is employed by the society, he receives the market-rate of wages. Thus he has wages, and interest for his money. Thirdly comes in the peculiar profit of the society. As there are no middle men, or bad debts, or interest to pay on locked-up capital in the shape of credit, the sales realise a considerable profit. After rent, wages, and repairs have been deducted for, there remains, therefore, a surplus for the proprietors, that is, for all the members of the Society, and the division is apportioned according to the shares and wages.

Meanwhile, as the co-operative million now shows, the capital is left to grow in safety. The income can be applied as the proprietors please. They can re-invest it in co-operative stores, lay it up in Post-office Savings' Banks, or spend it at their option.

For the encouragement of those who instinctively dread risks, it should be observed, first, that as long as the stores are of good quality, there is certain to be a call for them; and secondly, that the opening of the Rochdale store was overwhelmed with ridicule. The hucksters, especially, assailed it with every abuse the bitterest jealousy could call forth, and there were few who did not predict its ruin. In itself, its aspects were not promising. There were only four articles, the shopman did not know oatmeal from flour, and the whole stock could be carried in a wheelbarrow. Well may these brave flannel-weavers be called pioneers!

Two special points deserve a lasting record.

One is, that an object of the co-operative societies is to rescue the victims of the "tally-shops," which give credit for bad articles at long prices, and bind the customer in perpetual bondage. Some member of the society pledges himself for the debt, on condition of being repaid by instalments. Of all the pledges given, *not one penny has yet been lost.*

The other is, that in the heaviest hour of the Lancashire distress, the co-operative societies survived the strain made upon them, and subscribed to the Relief Fund. *One hundred and*

*thirty-four thousand eight hundred and seventy-three pounds* were drawn out by the distressed members, and still the sums subscribed to the Relief Fund were very large. In fact, *the distress was least wherever the co-operative societies prevailed.*

Any one who wishes to obtain full information on this important subject, should obtain "Self-Help for the People," by Mr. Holyoake; "The Co-operative Tracts," or "Co-operation in London and Lancashire," by Mr. Plummer. The "Co-operator" journal also supplies much interesting detail on the working of the societies.

THE END.







